DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 359 315 UD 029 353

AUTHOR	Moles, Oliver, Ed.
TITLE	Building Home-School Partnerships for Learning: Workshops for Urban Educators. Pilot Version.
INSTITUTION	Office of Educational Research and Improvement (ED), Washington, DC.
PUB DATE	92
NOTE	510p.; This pilot version contains complete project documentation. A reduced-size final version is projected.
PUB TYPE	Guides - Non-Classroom Use (055)
EDRS PRICE	MF02/PC21 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	*Academic Achievement; Educational Cooperation; Educational Environment; Elementary Education; Elementary School Students; *Family School Relationship; Learning; Low Income Groups; Minority Groups; *Parent Participation; Parent Workshops; *Partnerships in Education; School Role; *Teacher Role; *Urban Teaching; Urban Youth

ABSTRACT

School-initiated activities to change the home educational environment can strongly influence student learning, even in schools serving low-income and minority families. This sourcebook shows various ways that schools can take the initiative in reaching out and working with families as equal partners; and explores how family life, school programs, teacher practices, and district policies can help build home-school partnerships for learning. The following five workshops give urban educators new data and strategies for working with parents of elementary school students in kindergarten through grade 6: (1) "Families as Learning Environments"; (2) "School Programs and Practices"; (3) "Communication Skills and Strategies"; (4) "Homework and Home Learning Activities"; and (5) "School District Policies and Supports for Home-School Partnerships." The workshops emphasize home-school partnerships, home learning activities (homework, leisure reading, family discussions, and other home activities that supplement and reinforce schoolwork), home learning environments, and family strengths. Each workshop contains a leader's guide (a workshop overview, notes on needed preparations, background information, and ways of conducting each workshop activity), transparency masters, and a workbook for participants. An appendix presents information on further strategies to reach and involve parents; Federal Government programs; and information about urban families of diverse nationalities and different racial and ethnic backgrounds; and annotated lists of readings and resource organizations. (RLC)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED359315

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
☑ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it
☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality
• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy

Building Home-School Partnerships for Learning: Workshops for Urban Educators

Pilot Version
1992

Edited by Oliver Moles
Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI)

UD 029 353

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

BUILDING HOME-SCHOOL PARTNERSHIPS FOR LEARNING: WORKSHOPS FOR URBAN EDUCATORS (Pilot Version)

OVERVIEW

This sourcebook is designed to give urban educators new information and strategies for working with parents of elementary school students (grades K-6). Its five workshops written by eminent developers explore how family life, school programs, teacher practices, and district policies can help build home-school partnerships for learning. Each workshop is based on recent research and best available practices. The intended audience is primarily teachers, administrators, and other school personnel.

Four key concepts are threaded through these workshops: home-school partnerships, home learning activities, home learning environments, and family strengths. Home learning as used here includes homework, leisure reading, family discussions, and other home activities which supplement and reinforce schoolwork.

Many studies indicate that school-initiated activities to change the home educational environment can exert a strong influence on student learning, even in schools serving low-income and minority families. This sourcebook demonstrates various ways that schools can take the initiative in reaching out and working with families as equal partners.

Each workshop contains a leader's guide, transparency masters, and a workbook to be reproduced for participants. The leader's guide includes an overview of the workshop, notes on needed preparations, background information, and how to conduct each workshop activity.

Guidance for a 2 hour and a 3.5 to 4 hour version is found within each workshop. Each has an optional warm-up activity and most include planning for actions afterward. This sourcebook is a revision of Schools and Families Together: Helping Children Learn More at Home which was pilot tested on a limited basis in spring 1992. Descriptions of the workshops follow.

Families as Learning Environments. Topics in this initial workshop include the benefits of parent involvement in home learning, characteristics of successful home learning environments, and the diversity of contemporary American families. It aims to help participants recognize both family strengths and the obstacles families face, and begins to explore how school resources can help them build more successful learning environments.

School Programs and Practices. This workshop helps participants identify schoolwide factors that promote or hinder the development of home-school partnerships. It links characteristics of effective schools with those of successful home learning environments, discusses five kinds of partnership roles, and uses this information to analyze two case studies. It makes the case for school level actions to build strong partnerships with families.

OVER

Communication Skills and Strategies. In this workshop participants are helped to analyze and develop their competencies for interpersonal communication with diverse parents. School and staff practices that may hinder home-school communication are studied. Local home-school communication practices for different occasions are analyzed in terms of making them more effective.

Homework and Home Learning Activities. High quality homework assignments and helping families reinforce and extend classroom instruction are central to this workshop. The related research is reviewed, and the importance of schoolwide homework guidelines and practices as well as the teacher's role are discussed. Interactive home learning assignments are developed, and some family learning programs explored.

School Districts. This workshop focuses on district-wide policies and policy supports for effective home-school partnership programs. Supports for policy during its development, implementation and maintenance are considered as well as some existing school board policies, case studies of actual policy implementation, and the current research literature. This workshop is designed for school board members and others engaged in district-level policy development or review.

Appendix. It presents information on (1) further strategies to reach and involve parents; (2) federal government programs; (3) families of different racial, ethnic and nationality backgrounds; and (4) annotated lists of readings and resource organizations.

The workshops may be presented individually and adapted to the leader's style and local needs. The most benefit is likely to come from presenting all four school-oriented workshops over the course of a month or two with time between sessions to read, try out some planned activities, and assess needs and progress.

There is no charge for the sourcebook, but supplies are very limited. It is about 500 pages, and comes on 3-hole paper with section tabs. First priority goes to those willing to pilot test two or more workshops this school year and provide us with participant evaluations. (Forms for evaluation are included in the materials.) We expect to revise it for wider use in summer 1993.

More on the structure and development of the workshops can be found in the introduction to the sourcebook. We would welcome any comments on the workshops, their content and format.

For further information contact Oliver Moles, Project Director, Office of Research, Office of Educational Research and Improvement, U.S. Department of Education, Washington, DC 20208-5649. Phone (202) 219-2207. 11/92

A-1

BUILDING HOME-SCHOOL PARTNERSHIPS FOR LEARNING: WORKSHOPS FOR URBAN EDUCATORS (Pilot Version)

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
☒ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it
☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality
• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy

INTRODUCTION

Oliver C. Moles
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
U.S. Department of Education

This sourcebook is designed to give urban educators new information and strategies for working with parents. It contains five workshops and related materials for local staff development activities in elementary education (K-6). The workshops explore family life, school programs and teacher practices, and district policies that can help build home-school partnerships. The aim is to help teachers and administrators work more effectively with all parents (and parent surrogates) to strengthen learning activities at home that support learning at school.

This sourcebook is directed to urban educators although much of the material applies equally well to suburban and rural education. At present half the U.S. population lives in metropolitan areas. Our cities contain large concentrations of low-income and culturally diverse families with increasing numbers who are limited in English proficiency. Educators need to know more about the family life, cultural backgrounds, needs, and strengths of these diverse families, and techniques and strategies for working with them.

Parent involvement is not a cure-all or substitute for good schooling, but the accumulated research evidence strongly suggests that when school staff help parents strengthen home learning, students experience significant gains in achievement.

Building partnerships with families is not easy. Few teachers and administrators receive any pre-service training for working with parents (Chavkin & Williams, 1988). In-service training is also rare so most educators must rely on their accumulated experience in dealing with parents.

Many studies indicate that school-initiated activities to change the home educational environment can exert a strong influence on school performance, especially in schools serving low-income and minority families (Henderson, 1987; Kagan, 1984; Leler, 1983; Tangri & Moles, 1987; Walberg, 1984). In the process parents become more supportive of schools and school personnel, and educators report that this support brings them greater satisfaction and shows them how to build on the interest parents have in their children's education.

UD029353

A - 2

The Home Learning Environment

Home learning as used here stems from various activities of children alone and with their families which supplement and reinforce schoolwork. These activities may include homework, leisure reading, family discussions, educational games, shared hobbies, enrichment activities like artistic performances and library visits, and even chores which instill a sense of responsibility. They may be initiated by the student, other family members, teachers or others.

In the successful home learning environments discussed in these workshops, parents model an interest in learning, establish family routines, encourage the child's progress in school, monitor their activities, and do other things to stimulate achievement. The first workshop on Families as Learning Environments discusses how all families, regardless of structure, income level, or cultural background, can strengthen the home learning environment. The subsequent workshops show how teachers, schools and districts can help families realize this potential.

Home-School Partnerships

This sourcebook takes the position that in order to strengthen home learning, schools and families need to work together as equal partners. Parents and educators both contribute in major ways to the education of young people. When difficulties arise, it is more productive to work together to solve them than to blame the other.

Developing a basic level of trust and respect between parents and educators is essential for effective collaboration. Many urban parents have experienced difficulties in their own educational careers or their children's schooling. Some schools and teachers do not welcome parent involvement. These conditions leave many parents fearful and defensive in dealing with educators. To build trust with parents, schools will need to take the initiative. This might include strong personal outreach, welcoming parents to schools and classrooms, social gatherings where all can share informally, and joint program planning -- all points to be discussed in the workshops.

If parents are to be active partners, schools must also give them frequent information on children's school programs and progress. This is now a requirement of the federal Chapter I program. The demands of modern work and family life and the diversity of urban families challenge educators to reexamine traditional ways of interacting with parents. Schools may have to devise new approaches to reach and work effectively with all parents. Suggestions for doing this are the core of these workshops.

These workshops build on the premise that almost all families have important and often untapped strengths related to their children's education which they can bring to

A-3

home-school partnerships. One is the intimate knowledge parents have of their children's development, needs, and talents. Another is a keen interest in children's schooling and future, while a third is the desire to work with the schools for their children's benefit. Such interests are well documented in various studies (Chavkin, 1989; Gotts & Purnell, 1987; Harris et al., 1987; Lareau, 1987; Snow, 1982) and in the experience of program developers with broad contacts (Henderson, Marburger & Ooms, 1986; Lueder, 1989; Rich, 1988). These strengths are discussed in the first workshop.

The low level of contact educators have with many urban parents should not be taken as evidence that parents do not care about their children's education. Numerous studies show that they do care (Chavkin & Williams, 1989; Epstein, 1983; Harris et al., 1987; Menacker et al., 1988; Moles, in press). Instead, obstacles to greater contact and collaboration lie in other directions: the current skills, opportunities for contact, and the varied needs and traditions of families and educators. These too will be explored in the workshops.

Suggested Uses of This Volume

This sourcebook contains the following workshops as well as related resource materials in an appendix. All except the last workshop are for teachers, administrators and other school staff.

1. Families as Learning Environments
2. School Programs and Practices
3. Communication Skills and Strategies
4. Homework and Home Learning Activities
5. School District Policies and Supports
   (for district policy developers)

The main topics in each workshop are listed in its overview section. Timing for a two hour and a 3.5 to 4 hour version of each is indicated. With more time issues can be explored in depth moving participants from greater awareness to greater involvement. To stay within allotted times, all leaders should review and rehearse the material carefully.

These workshops can be used in a variety of ways. Each is self-contained and may be presented by itself. If only one hour blocks are available, each can be broken into two or three parts. The most benefit is likely to come from presenting the entire set of workshops spread over the course of a month or two with time between sessions to read, to try out some planned activities, and to assess needs and progress.

Leaders are encouraged to adapt the materials to their own styles, situations and the needs of participants. It is recommended that administrators take part since many of the workshop activities concern the whole school and their support would be needed for schoolwide changes.

The focus of this sourcebook is on elementary school students (grades K-6) since more is known from research and practice about home-school relationships among younger students. Where possible, the upper elementary grades (4-6) are emphasized since school outreach and parent involvement often begin to decline at these grade levels. The more complex organization of secondary schools and the growing independence of secondary students suggest that a separate sourcebook would be needed for secondary education issues.
This sourcebook comes on 3-hole paper for loose-leaf binders because it is meant to be an evolving resource. With this format, changes can easily be made based on field trials, local needs, and new research. Sections can be removed for reproduction and self study. We encourage users to add material to suit local needs, and to tell the project director of new material or approaches to the workshops that might help others.

All material may be copied freely. Permissions to reproduce all copyrighted material have been secured.

Structure of the Workshops

Four key concepts are threaded through these workshops: home-school partnerships, home learning activities, home learning environments, and family strengths. They have been discussed already to some extent. For reference, they are also defined on a sheet at the end of this introduction.

The families workshop sets the tone for the series by exploring the strengths and diversity of families and ways schools can help families strengthen home learning environments for their children. The schools workshop shows how making schools more effective can better support parents and teachers. The communications workshop helps teachers and administrators examine and build skills and strategies for working with diverse parents and circumstances. The homework workshop focuses on actions by which schools and teachers can promote more home learning--a central concern of this series. The district workshop show how individual school efforts can be greatly enhanced when their districts have policies and supports for policies related to home-school partnerships.

Some workshops have added activities for further study or short materials to review

A-5

beforehand. The case studies and research summaries are also suitable for self study. Most workshops end with a discussion of plans for action.

An important feature of this sourcebook is that a researcher and a practitioner expert on parent involvement issues worked together to develop each workshop (see following list of developers). In this way we tried to incorporate the latest and best information from both research and practice, and also check the information from one against the other. The workshop developers are listed at the end of this introduction.

Each workshop contains a leader's guide, transparency masters, and a workbook to be reproduced for participants. The leader's guide includes an overview of the workshop, notes on needed preparations, background information, and a description of each workshop activity.

Forms for evaluations of each workshop are provided for leaders and participants. Please see that they are filled out and returned as noted on the Leader's Summary of Participant Evaluation Forms. This will help show where revisions would be useful and help future presenters.

An appendix contains additional case studies, research summaries, federal initiatives, and other resources not used directly in the workshops.

Development of the Sourcebook

This project began with the accumulated evidence that a student's home activities can improve school learning, that parents can influence and usually want to improve these activities, but that they need encouragement and assistance from educators to do this. Thus we sought new ways to give urban educators new information and proven strategies so as to work better with parents. A proposal for this project was shaped around these ideas, and funds allotted by the Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI) in the U.S. Department of Education. The editor of this volume and director of this project works in the OERI Office of Research.

A small planning conference was held in Washington D.C. in March 1991. At this meeting educators, policymakers, education association representatives, program developers, and researchers familiar with parent involvement issues reviewed preliminary plans. Representatives of local and state education agencies and individual schools have been involved from the start to make the materials as useful as possible. After the planning meeting materials for this sourcebook were commissioned. A search for supplementary materials in published sources and the public domain was also conducted. Users should note that reference to commercially developed materials does not imply endorsement of these products.

Another conference in the fall of 1991 reviewed draft materials for this sourcebook. The present pilot version builds on a spring 1992 pilot version tested by a few school districts in the East and West. The developers met during the summer of 1992 to review that experience and plan this new version for wider pilot testing. We hope you will find this sourcebook useful and responsive to your needs.

Since this pilot is being tested during the 1992-93 school year, we would welcome any comments on the workshops, their content and format.

References

Chavkin, N.F. (1989). Debunking the myth about minority parents. Educational Horizons, (summer) 119-123.

Chavkin, N.F. and Williams, D.L., Jr. (1988). Critical issues in teacher training for parent involvement. Educational Horizons, (winter) 87-89.

Chavkin, N.F. and Williams, D.L., Jr. (1989). Low-income parents' attitudes toward parent involvement in education. Journal of Sociology and Social Welfare.

Epstein, J.L. (1983). Effects on parents of teacher practices of parent involvement. Report No. 346. Baltimore, MD.: Johns Hopkins University, Center for Social Organization of Schools.

Gotts, E.E. and Purnell, R.F. (1987). Practicing school-family relations in urban settings. Education and Urban Society, 19 (2), 212-218.

Harris, L., Kagay, M. and Ross, J. (1987). The Metropolitan Life survey of the American teacher: Strengthening links between home and school. New York: Louis Harris and Associates.

Henderson, A. (1987). The evidence continues to grow: Parent involvement improves student achievement. Columbia, MD.: National Committee for Citizens in Education.

Henderson, A., Marburger, C.L. and Ooms, T. (1986). Beyond the bake sale: An educator's guide to working with parents. Columbia, MD.: National Committee for Citizens in Education.

Kagan, S.L. (1984). Parent involvement research: A field in search of itself. Boston: Institute for Responsive Education.

Lareau, A. (1987). Social class differences in family-school relationships: The importance of cultural capital. Sociology of Education, 60 (April) 73-85.

Leler, H. (1983). Parent education and involvement in relation to the schools and to parents of school-aged children. In R. Haskins and D. Adams (eds.), Parent education and public policy. Norwood, NJ: Ablex.

Lueder, D.C. (1989). Tennessee parents were invited to participate--and they did. Educational Leadership, 47 (2) 15-17.

Menacker, J., Hurwitz, E. and Weldon, W. (1988). Parent-teacher cooperation in schools serving the urban poor. The Clearing House 62, 108-112.

Moles, O.C. (in press). Collaboration between schools and disadvantaged parents: Obstacles and openings. In N. Chavkin (ed.), Families and schools in a pluralistic society. Albany, NY: SUNY Press.

Rich, D. (1988). Bridging the parent gap in education reform. Educational Horizons, 66 (2), 90-92.

Snow, M.B. (1982). Characteristics of families with special needs in relation to schools. Charleston, WV: Appalachia Educational Laboratory.

Tangri, S.S. and Moles, O. (1987). Parents and the community. In V. Richardson-Koehler (ed.) Educator's handbook. New York: Longman.

Walberg, H.J. (1984). Families as partners in educational productivity. Phi Delta Kappan, 65, 397-400.

KEY TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

FAMILY STRENGTHS. Refers to a cluster of factors found in all families that can be tapped by schools seeking to build effective home-school partnerships. Included among these are: (1) the intimate knowledge parents have of their children's needs and talents; (2) the keen interest parents have in their children's schooling and future; (3) the desire to work with the schools for their children's benefit; (4) parents are the first and most enduring teacher of children; and (5) parents have vast opportunities to teach, model and guide their children. These factors are well-documented in various studies (Chavkin, 1989; Gotts & Purnell, 1987; Harris et al., 1987; Lareau, 1987; Snow, 1982) and in the experience of program developers (Henderson, Marburger, & Ooms, 1986; Lueder, 1989; Rich, 1988);

HOME-SCHOOL PARTNERSHIPS. The mutual collaboration, support, and participation of families and school staff at home or at the school site in activities and efforts that directly and positively affect the success of children's learning and progress in school. The partnership is assumed to be an equal one in which both parents and educators contribute in major ways to the education of young people. The partnership is based upon mutual trust and respect with educators taking the initiative to develop and nurture these key ingredients to effective collaboration.

HOME-LEARNING ENVIRONMENT. The context within which home learning activities and home learning take place. Research has shown a number of characteristics of home learning environments that are successful in promoting children's success in school. For the purposes of these workshops, seven characteristics of successful home learning environments are discussed: (1) establishing a daily family routine; (2) monitoring out-of-school activities; (3) modeling the value of learning and hard work; (4) expressing high, but realistic, expectations; (5) encouraging child's overall development and progress in school; (6) reading, writing, and discussions among family members; and (7) using community resources for family needs. (See Families Workshop: Activity #3)

HOME LEARNING ACTIVITIES. All the ways that learning is fostered at home with and without encouragement from schools. For present purposes we are most interested in those ways that schools can influence home learning. These activities fall into three broad categories: (1) homework, which is an extension of class learning, and primarily meant for children to complete outside the classroom on their own; (2) home learning suggestions given by the teacher in which the parent or other family members are meant to be active partners. These learning suggestions are given to supplement and expand what is covered in school and give parents a guided opportunity to join in their children's school learning; (3) family initiated home learning activities such as leisure reading, family discussions, trips, religious and cultural activities, and games in which parents are likely to be actively involved with children.

WORKSHOP DEVELOPERS

1. Families as Learning Environments

Anne T. Henderson (developer)
National Committee for Citizens in Education
Washington, D.C.

Jocelyne Comtois (co-developer)
Silver Spring, MD

Diane Scott-Jones (contributor)
Educational Testing Service
Princeton, NJ

2. School Programs and Practices

Janet Chrispeels (developer)
San Diego County Office of Education

Lillian Brinkley (contributor)
Principal, Willard Model School
Norfolk (VA) Public Schools

3. Communication Skills and Strategies

Lettie B. Cale (developer)
Educational Consultant
Phoenix, AZ

Reginald M. Clark (contributor)
Educational Consultant
Montclair, CA

4. Homework and Home Learning Activities

Janet Chrispeels (developer) with material from Lettie B. Cale

5. School District Policies and Supports

Nancy Feyl Chavkin (developer)
Richter School of Social Work
Southwest Texas State University

Izona Warner (contributor)
Quality Education Project
Indianapolis, IN

6. Assessment Activities

Diane D'Angelo
RMC Research Corporation
Portsmouth, NH

Each set of workshop materials was reviewed by Jackie Walsh, Training and Education Consultant, Montgomery, Alabama and the project director, Oliver Moles. Developers also reviewed each other's work.

B-1

Building Home-School Partnerships for Learning

Workshops for Urban Educators (Pilot Version)

Families as Learning Environments

Workshop Leader's Guide

Developed for
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
U.S. Department of Education
by Anne T. Henderson

B-2

FAMILIES AS LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS

Workshop Leader's Guide

Overview

KEY CONCEPT:
Every family functions as a home learning environment, regardless of its structure, economic level, or ethnic or cultural background. Consequently, every family has the potential to support and improve the academic achievement of its children.

RATIONALE AND PURPOSE:
Our country has always had a dynamic demographic history, but the changes in families over the last twenty years have been dramatic. These changes include more single parents and working mothers, more children living in poverty, and more immigrant families especially from Latin America and Asia. The schools are attempting to work with such families, but schools must come to know and understand better the diverse family backgrounds of their students before they can reach them effectively.

The purpose of this workshop is to explore how schools can support diverse urban families in developing strong home learning environments, thereby enhancing the potential of their children to succeed in school.

LEARNER OBJECTIVES:
By the end of this workshop, the participants will be able to:

1. Understand the connection between the home learning environment and student achievement
2. Recognize the strengths inherent in families
3. Identify the components of strong home learning environments that cut across diverse family structures, economic levels, and ethnic or cultural backgrounds, and that adapt to the changing needs of children as they develop from kindergarten through 6th grade
4. Recognize obstacles to building strong home learning environments and the resources schools can provide to help families.

ESTIMATED TIME: 2 hours short version/3 hours long version. Times for activities that follow are given for short/long version.

B-3

ACTIVITIES:

#1 Warm up and Introduction: What Did Your Family Do at Home to Help You be Successful in School? (20/25 minutes)

#2 Benefits of Parent Involvement in Home Learning and Strengths of Families. (20/30 minutes)

#3 Successful Home Learning Environments for Children from Kindergarten to 6th grade. (25/25 minutes)

* Break (10-15 minutes) *

#4 Diverse American Families (not used/45 minutes)

#5 How Schools Can Help Families Build More Successful Learning Environments (25/25 minutes)

#6 Summary, Next Steps, and Evaluation (15/15 minutes)

TRANSPARENCIES: For contents see transparencies cover page.

PARTICIPANT WORKBOOK: For contents see cover page of workbook.

EQUIPMENT AND MATERIALS:

Overhead projector, transparencies, easel, flip chart, colored markers, writing pads, felt tip pens, welcoming signs, blank name tags, refreshments

Also recommended:

- Pictures of children and families with children from various ethnic groups: white (European American), black (African American), Asian, Hispanic, Native American

Workshop Preparations

Prior to the workshop, workshop leaders need to become familiar with the information in this section. Reviewing the recommended readings and resources should also be helpful. Workshop leaders need to study the workshop outline and are encouraged to adapt the materials to their own styles, situations, and the needs of the participants and organizations with which they are working.

Leaders will need to photocopy the Participant Workbook for all participants, make overhead transparencies from the "masters" included in the Transparency Section, and take care of other workshop logistics (see below).

Tailoring Workshop to Audience

The main audience for this workshop is teachers, administrators and other personnel from individual schools.

Sometime before this first workshop, leaders will need to collect information on the families and students served by the school(s) to which you're presenting. Use the form, "Participating School Characteristics," provided at the end of this leader's guide to collect and record these data. You will need to reference these data at specified points in Activity #4 (see ** marks). Additionally, you can use these as points of reference throughout your presentation so as to make this workshop as relevant as possible to the particular audience to which you are presenting.

Approximately one week before the workshop, you should send all preregistered participants a pre-workshop package to include the recommended readings: "Improving the School-Home Connection for Low-Income Urban Parents" (ERIC Digest, 1988); "Curriculum of the Home" (WHAT WORKS, 1986); and "A Closer Look at Children in Single-Parent Families" (ERIC Digest, 1984). Master copies of these readings appear in the first section of the Participant Workbook. You may also wish to write a cover memo that describes the workshop (e.g. gives the purpose and objectives), confirms the time and place for the session, explains the purpose of the readings, and welcomes participants to the session. In the event that you are unable to complete a pre-workshop mailing, reproduce these three readings as a part of the Participant Workbook to be distributed at the time of the workshop.

Logistics

If possible, identify a workshop host who can handle the site preparations, make room arrangements, prepare name tags, and organize refreshments. Even when someone else handles this task, the leader should check all preparations prior to the session. Also, plan the seating arrangements so that participants can work in small groups, preferably seated at round tables.

Prior to the workshop, post pictures around the room of children and/or families with children from various ethnic groups: European American, African American, Asian, Pacific Islander, Hispanic, Native American. Write the key concept statement and the learner objectives on chart paper or poster board and keep both these charts in view throughout the session. Place a flip chart near the door with the following message:

WELCOME!

1. Take a name tag and write your name on it.
2. While waiting for the workshop:
    -Have some refreshments.
    -Look at the posters on the wall.
    -Review the material in your packet.
3. Make yourself comfortable.

Debates and Dilemmas:

There are a number of questions or dilemmas that surface when studying families as learning environments. The workshop leader needs to be sensitive to these issues and be able to discuss them with participants. The activity that addresses each question is indicated in parentheses following the questions.

1. Do home learning activities help children do better in school? (Activity 2)

o When parents are trained in simple techniques for tutoring their elementary school children, most children show significant gains in reading achievement (Leler, 1983) **(All references to authors and their works appear at end of workbook.)**

o When parents read to their children and listen to their children read, encourage discussions at home, and play games to teach skills, children's performance in school improves (Tangri and Moles, 1987).

o A large body of research on young children shows that creating a positive learning environment at home, including encouraging positive attitudes toward education and high expectations for success, has a powerful impact on student achievement (Henderson, 1987).

2. How should educators take into account the diverse cultural and ethnic backgrounds of urban families? (Activity 4)

o Cultural and ethnic diversity presents both challenges and opportunities to the schools. Learning about the different cultures represented in their classrooms will help teachers to work with parents to structure effective home learning environments for their children.

o All parents have ideas and beliefs about human behavior, and specific knowledge about their own children as a result of observing and interacting with them. Educators may want to expand or modify parents' ideas about their children's development, but first it is important to acknowledge the basic value of parents' beliefs and knowledge.

o Descriptions of cultural patterns, such as those articles cited and included in the Appendix, represent average configurations for groups, not the specific behavior of any given individual. Each student is unique; each family has its own characteristics.

o This workshop focuses on characteristics of effective home learning environments that can be found in a wide range of family structures, economic levels, and ethnic and cultural backgrounds.

3. How much influence does a family's socioeconomic status have on their children's achievement in school? (Activity 3)

o Families are often described in terms of family income, educational level of the parents, and parents' occupations. This complex of factors is referred to as socioeconomic status, or SES. Many studies have found a relationship between low SES and low achievement in school.

o When researchers look beyond these general descriptors, they find that how families interact and the specific activities in which they engage their children have more influence on their children's performance than educational or occupational status (Walberg, 1984). For example, Portes (1983) found that a measure of family communication style accounted for as much variance in achievement test scores as did socioeconomic status, and more than did race or ethnicity.

4. What kinds of family interactions promote student achievement? (Activity 3)

o A large body of research examines the home learning environment and how it can be structured to support student achievement.

o Certain characteristics of families whose children tend to do well in school despite differences in family income, cultural or ethnic background, and education level are mentioned frequently in this literature. These characteristics of what we call successful home learning environments are discussed in detail in Activity 3 of this workshop:

5. What are the trends in family structures, economic levels, and ethnic and cultural backgrounds of urban families that will affect their ability to create effective home learning environments? (Activity 5)

o Poverty in the United States is increasing. In 1979, the nation's poverty rate was 11.7%; by 1988, it had climbed to 13.1% (Children's Defense Fund (CDF), 1991).

o One-fifth of American children live in poverty, and over 50% of children in single-parent families live in poverty (CDF, 1991).

o One of five children now lives in a one-parent family. Between one-third and one-half of children born in the 1970's will spend some time in a single-parent family (Scott-Jones, 1986).

o For all groups of mothers, participation in the labor force is above 50 percent. In no segment of society are working mothers in the minority.

o In the 1980's, more than 14 million people immigrated to the United States, a wave comparable in this century only to the 1920's (Hodgkinson, 1989).

o By the year 2000, the ratio of the U.S. population that is now defined as "minority" (i.e. not European American) will be one of every 3 persons, and 43% of new workers will be immigrants or native-born minorities (Hodgkinson, 1989).

6. What is the effect on student achievement of living in a family that has two parents employed outside of the home? (Activity 5)

o The employment of mothers has no universally positive or negative influence on children. The only common experience is that families are both economically better off and have less time together when mothers work outside the home.

o Working has been linked to higher achievement of students of low-income and African American mothers, but has mixed, weak and sometimes negative effects on other children (Milne, 1989).

o Recent research does not find uniformly negative effects for children living in single-parent families (Moles, 1992). When SES is taken into account, there are no achievement differences between children from single and two-parent families (Scott-Jones, 1988), suggesting that the differences may be attributable to lower income rather than to family structure.

7. What kind of strengths can be found in all families, even those who find themselves in the most difficult circumstances? (Activity 2)

o Parents are their children's first and most important teachers.

o As their children's first and most important teachers, parents have vast opportunities to serve as role models and to guide their children as they enter society.

o Parents have intimate knowledge of their children's needs, skills, and interests; they know their children better than anyone else does.

o Most parents have a keen interest in their children's education and want their children to be successful.

o Most parents would like to work with the schools to benefit their children.

NOTE: Although we acknowledge the fact that some families ARE seriously troubled, this workshop will not address extreme behavior. The focus will be on the variations that exist within the range of normal, healthy families.

B-9

Activity #1: Warm-Up and Introduction: What Did Your Family Do at Home to Help You be Successful in School?

Objective: The participants will become acquainted with the structure of the workshops and with each other, and become personally involved with the topic of the workshop.

Recommended Time: 20 minutes short, 25 minutes long version

Directions and Procedures:

1. **Introductions and Workshop Overview.** (A maximum of 10 minutes should be allocated for this segment of Activity 1. Be sure to pace yourself so as to allow some time at the end for participant reactions to workshop objectives.)

a. Introduce yourself and present the key concept that will be the focus of this workshop (Show T-1)

Key Concept: "Every family functions as a home learning environment, regardless of its structure, economic level, ethnic or cultural background. Consequently, every family has the potential to support and improve the academic achievement of its children."

b. Explain to participants that this is the first in a series of four workshops for school staffs included in a sourcebook entitled "Building Home-School Partnerships for Learning: Workshops for Urban Educators." A fifth workshop, "School District Policies and Supports," was designed especially for those people developing and revising policies in parent involvement. ***Place T-2 on the overhead projector, and share with participants the other workshop titles*:**

BUILDING HOME-SCHOOL PARTNERSHIPS FOR LEARNING:
WORKSHOPS FOR URBAN EDUCATORS

Workshop 1:	"Families as Learning Environments"
Workshop 2:	"School Programs and Practices"
Workshop 3:	"Communication Skills and Strategies"
Workshop 4:	"Homework and Home Learning Activities"
Workshop 5:	"School District Policies and Supports"

The Office of Research within the Office of Educational Research and Improvement , U.S. Department of Education, produced this sourcebook for educators attempting to assist urban parents strengthen home learning activities among elementary school students (grades K-6).

The key concept driving this workshop, which focuses upon families themselves, is critical to the concepts developed through the other workshops because school programs, teacher practices, and district policies should all be developed by reference to the nature and potential of the families to be served. (At this point, advise participants of the schedule for other workshops which your district/organizational unit will offer to them, and encourage them to attend all applicable workshops).

* * * * * *

b-1 (for longer workshop version) Many of the ideas introduced in this workshop recur throughout the workshop series. Take a few minutes at this point to examine two of the key terms and their definitions so as to begin building a common vocabulary and set of understandings. ***Place T-3 on the overhead projector, and direct participants to Activity Sheet # 1 in their Workbooks.*** Go over the definition for each term, as provided below, and allow time for participant questions and clarification, if needed. **(Allow 5 minutes)**

Home-school partnerships - The mutual collaboration, support, and participation of families and school staff at home or at the school site in activities and efforts that directly and positively affect the success of children's learning and progress in school. The partnership is assumed to be an equal one in which both parents and educators contribute in major ways to the education of young people. Although the partnership is based upon mutual trust and respect, educators need to take the initiative to develop and nurture these key ingredients of effective collaboration.

Home Learning Activities - All the ways that learning is fostered at home with and without encouragement from schools. For present purposes we are most interested in those ways that schools can influence home learning. These activities fall into three broad categories:

1. Homework, which is an extension of class learning, and primarily meant for children to complete outside the classroom on their own;
2. Home learning activities suggested by the teacher in which the parent or other family members are meant to be active partners. These suggestions are given to supplement and expand what is covered in school and give parents a guided opportunity to join in their children's learning;
3. Family-initiated home learning activities such as leisure reading, family discussions, religious and cultural activities, games, and chores in which parents are likely to be actively involved with their children.

* * * * * *

c. ***Place T-4 (Learner Objectives) on the overhead projector; review the objectives;*** and ask participants if they have questions about the objectives of the workshop or any other areas of major concern. If questions are raised, note them on the chart pad and indicate which ones will be addressed in this workshop and which will need to be explored in future workshops or through other means. (Be certain to familiarize yourself with the contents of the Appendix as well as that of the other three workshops for school staffs so that you may point participants to these resources.) (5 minutes)

LEARNER OBJECTIVES

By the end of this workshop, the participants will be able to:

1. Explain the connection between home learning environment and student achievement

2. Recognize the strengths inherent in families

3. Identify the components of strong home learning environments that cut across diverse kinds of families, and that adapt to the changing needs of children as they develop from grades K-6

4. Recognize obstacles to building strong home learning environments and the resources schools can provide to help families

d. Ask: Do these objectives meet your expectations? Take a short time to respond to any questions or concerns.

2. Orientation Exercise (10 minutes)

a. Direct participants to form into five or six groups (depending on size of audience). To obtain some diversity, you might instruct participants to "get together with some others who are different from you." Explain that the purpose of this exercise is to get acquainted, reflect, and share around an issue central to this workshop.

b. Direct groups to:
(1) Select a recorder who will note all responses on paper.
(2) Introduce themselves to each other.
(3) Respond, in turn, to the following question (which you should write on chart paper): "What did your parents do to help you be successful in school?"
(4) Allow equal time to all members of the group.
(Time: approximately 5 minutes)

8-12

c. Plenary session: When the 5 minutes have expired, focus participant attention to the front, and ask for reporting out from groups. **(Time: 4-5 minutes for reporting and wrap-up)**

(1) The reporter for each group should share one way a member's family supported school success. Reporting from groups should continue in a fast-paced, round-robin fashion until all responses are exhausted. Reporters should offer only one response per turn; discussion should not be invited at this point.
(2) Workshop leader records all activities on chart paper for future reference. *(Post this paper on the wall.)*

NOTE: The list of support activities generated usually shows that most parent/family support occurs at home, outside the view of school staff, and that there are many ways that families offer support. There may be one or two in the group who feel they had little or no support. If so, make the point that students can be successful without extensive parent involvement or participation, but that it is harder to do so. If a participant mentions severe physical punishment, try to find another who succeeded without this form of parental intervention. While you should generally refrain from making value judgments about the nature of the support, you might want to ask if a questionable practice was truly supportive. Then point out that our purpose is to uncover activities that truly support achievement in school. The common thread is the genuine concern of the parents and the importance they attach to their children's school experience.

(3) Establish a link between the participants' experience and the purpose of the workshop. Remind them that one purpose of the workshop is to explore how families with diverse structures, economic levels, and ethnic or cultural backgrounds develop strong home learning environments, thereby enhancing the potential of their children to succeed in school.

Activity #2: Benefits of Parent Involvement in Home Learning and Strengths of All Families

Objective: The participants will understand the positive connection between parent involvement in home learning and student achievement and the strengths families have to support their children.

Recommended Time: 20 minutes short / 30 minutes long version

Directions and Procedures:

1. Workshop leader states: "Research shows that when parents involve their children in learning activities at home, parent-child relationships improve, their children tend to do better in school, parents become more positive about schools, and school personnel develop higher expectations for students."

2. Mini-Lecture: **(Show T-5, "Benefits of Parent Involvement for Students" on the overhead projector) 10 minutes / 15 minutes**

Everyone benefits from parent and family involvement in the schools: students, parents, teachers, schools, and the community. For less advantaged children and families, there is a lot to gain.

The benefits of parent involvement have been widely reported:

Benefits of Parent Involvement for Students (T-5)

o **Academic Achievement Rises**
o **Behavior Improves**
o **Motivation Increases**
o **Attendance Becomes More Regular**
o **Dropout Rates Fall**
o **Attitudes About Homework Become More Positive**
o **Parent and Community Support Increases**
(Hester, 1989)

Recent studies also show that:

1. If there is a strong component of parent involvement, students perform better than those in programs with less parent involvement.
2. Children whose parents are in touch with schools score higher than children of similar aptitude and background whose parents are not involved.
3. Parents who help their children learn at home nurture in themselves and their children attitudes that are crucial to achievement.
4. Children who are falling behind in school improve dramatically when parents are called in to help. (Henderson, 1988)

An example: In Chicago, 99 percent of the parents in 41 classes signed a contract to provide work space at home for their children, to encourage and praise schoolwork, and to cooperate with the teacher. The result? Students in the program achieved TWICE the grade-level gain as those not participating. (Krasnow, 1990)

Many of the research studies are based on inner-city schools with large numbers of low-income and minority students. The findings are consistently positive: **parent involvement in many forms appears to produce measurable gains in student achievement.** (Henderson, 1988)

In addition, the effects persist beyond the short-term. Studies show that low-income, minority graduates of preschool programs with high levels of parent involvement are still outperforming their peers when they reach senior high school -- and at least one study shows results into the college years. (Henderson, 1987)

Parents also benefit. They develop greater appreciation of their important role in their children's education, a sense of adequacy and self-worth, strengthened social networks, and motivation to resume their own education. (Davies, 1988)

* * * * * *

For longer version only, include material to next set of asterisks:
Show T-6, "Benefits of Parent Involvement for Parents"

- **Receive Ideas from School on How to Help Children**
- **Learn More About Educational Program and How the School Works**
- **Become More Supportive of Children**
- **Become more Confident about Ways to Help Children Learn (Henderson, 1987)**

But that is not all. According to researcher Urie Bronfenbrenner:

"Not only do parents become more effective as parents, they also become more effective as people. It's a matter of higher self-esteem. Once they saw they could do something about their child's education, they saw they could do something about their housing, their community, and their jobs." (Amundson, 1988)

Finally, teachers also benefit. Joyce Epstein has shown that teachers discover their lives are made easier if they get help from parents, and parents who are involved tend to have more positive views of teachers. Being involved leads to feelings of ownership, resulting in increased support of schools and willingness to pay taxes to fund schools. (Davies, 1988)

Show T-7, "Benefits of Parent Involvement for Teachers and Schools"

- Teacher Morale Improves
- Parents Rate Teachers Higher
- Student Achievement Improves
- Parents Support Schools and Bond Issues
(Davies, 1988)

* * * * * *

3. Workshop leader states: "Based on this review of the research on parent involvement and our own experiences, we may conclude that the home environment is a key factor in improving student achievement. None of us, however, would hold that home environment is the ONLY factor related to student success in school." Refer to Activity Sheet #3.

* * * * * *

For longer version: Make the following points (Time: 2-3 mins.):

a. Children are influenced by a complex interaction of many forces; the family is important, but it is not the only influence.

b. Given the many factors outside any family's control, moderate change in student progress is probably the most appropriate expectation for an enhanced family learning environment. Programs to increase parent involvement do not substitute for a high quality experience in school, or for efforts to improve the curriculum and teaching methods.

c. Even though families have an important influence on their children's achievement, the responsibility to address children's problems in school should not be laid on the home. Mutual support is the answer.

d. For educators to work effectively with parents, we need to be sensitive to the fact that all families, regardless of their structure, economic level, and ethnic or cultural background, have inherent strengths which they can use in providing an effective home learning environment.

* * * * * *

4. All families have strengths that they can build on to encourage their children and to structure a home environment that supports learning. *Place T-8, "Strengths of Families," on the overhead projector*, and (using a sheet of paper as an overlay) uncover the four strengths one at a time. Comment on each point as indicated below, and invite participant comments and reactions. Ask participants to recall

their reflections in the previous exercises to identify incidents or cases that reinforce one or more of the strengths. (Time: 10 mins.)

- **As their children's first and most important teachers, parents have vast opportunities to serve as role models and to guide their children as they grow.** (Most) parents have known their children since birth and have a closer relationship with their children than does anyone else. Because parents are with their children in a great variety of settings and situations, they have boundless opportunities to teach directly, set an example for study and learning, observe their children's activities and behavior, and guide their development.

- **Parents have intimate knowledge of their children's needs, skills, and interests; they know their children better than anyone else does.** From their lifelong, close relationship, parents have a unique knowledge of their children. Even though educators may have specialized knowledge of how to identify and develop skills, needs, and interests, teachers typically see children for only a year or so. The knowledge and insight parents have of their children can be an important resource for teachers in understanding how to motivate a child or handle a difficulty.

- **Parents have a keen interest in their children's education and want their children to be successful.** Increasingly, parents (especially low-income, minority parents) are reputed to show little interest and support for school. But parents themselves tell a different story. Program developers and evaluators with broad experience have found that all kinds of parents are very interested in their children's education (Moles, in press). For example, in a southwestern regional survey, 95 percent of African American and Hispanic parents said they should be sure their elementary school children do their homework and they wanted to spend time helping them get the best education (Chavkin, 1989) A 1991 national survey concluded that "parents care deeply about their children's education" (*Newsweek , 1991).* Still, many often are unable to spend time with teachers and in the school, and many are intimidated by school settings, having had an unsuccessful school experience themselves.

- **Most parents would like to work with the schools to benefit their children.** Low parent turnout for school meetings and events does not necessarily mean that parents do not care about working with schools. Factors such as discomfort in dealing with professional educators, other family and job-related responsibilities, and language barriers, play a far larger role than lack of interest. In a Maryland survey, 85 percent of elementary school parents said they spent a quarter hour or more an evening helping their children when teachers requested it, and were willing to spend even more if asked (Epstein, 1983). In the southwest regional survey, low-income parents were as interested as higher income parents in being involved in evaluating their children's progress, selecting methods of classroom discipline, and deciding the amount of homework to be assigned (Chavkin and Williams, 1989).

SUMMARY: The overriding message is that most parents want to work with schools. We know, however, that many are unable to come to their children's schools because of work schedules and other inhibitors. Our challenge as educators is to look for ways to work with parents without requiring their presence at the school itself.

In the next activity, we'll look at seven characteristics of successful home learning environments that cut across diverse families. This will provide us with a framework for thinking about the kinds of things we can contribute as educators to strengthen home learning environments, especially for those families who are unable to work with the school in more traditional ways that involve their physical presence at school.

Refer participants to Activity Sheet #4: "Strengths of Families," for study and use as future reference.

Activity #3: **Successful Home Learning Environments for Children from Kindergarten to 6th Grade**

Objectives: The participants will become familiar with the components of strong home learning environments that are common to diverse family structures, economic levels, and ethnic and cultural backgrounds. They will also understand how family learning environments adapt to the changing needs of children as they develop from kindergarten through 6th grade.

Recommended Time: 25 minutes/ short and long versions

Directions and Procedure:

1. Introduction:

   a. Say: **"Parents are their children's first and most influential teachers. What parents do to help their children learn is more important to academic success than how well-off the family is."**

   b. Tell participants that you'll be exploring the characteristics of home learning that seem to be most closely associated with children's achievement in school. **Say: These characteristics can be attained by all kinds of families – white and of color, rich and poor, one- and two-parent, working or not – and can be developed by all kinds of parents, grandparents, or other family members, regardless of educational level.**

2. Activity **(10-12 minutes): [optional, depending on time constraints]**

   a. ask participants to form small groups of 5-6 people. Ask them to select a recorder.

   b. Give each group this assignment (write on chart paper):

   "You are the advisors to a study on home learning environments. The researchers have asked you to list what you think are the most important characteristics of a successful home learning environment, one that supports student achievement. List no more than five characteristics that are all possible regardless of income level. (For example, owning a set of the Encyclopedia Britannica does NOT qualify). **(Allow 5 minutes to discuss)**

   c. Ask the group recorders, in round-robin fashion, to list ONE characteristic their group identified. Go around the room until all ideas are given. Write the ideas on chart paper and post. **(Allow 5-6 minutes)**

3. Plenary Session: **Show T-9, "Characteristics of Successful Home Learning Environments," on the screen, and tell participants that you'll be examining each of these seven in turn.**

a. Explain that this list of characteristics draws on a large body of research, but there is no "definitive list." It reflects those qualities that appear frequently in the research. The purpose of this exercise is not to develop a complete set of categories, but to generate thoughtful discussion. Show how the characteristics the group identified relate to this list and compliment participants on their efforts.

b. Add that these points are intended to help educators recognize and reinforce family characteristics associated with high achievement. **Educators are NOT expected to teach or lecture parents about how to be more effective, but rather to create situations where parents can work together with educators to strengthen home learning.**

c. Present each of the seven characteristics, one at a time, using a sheet of paper as a sliding overlay. As you present each characteristic, comment briefly using the narrative provided beneath each characteristic, and provide one or two examples from those the group listed earlier. **Before going on to the next characteristic, mention the developmental considerations.**

Note to the Workshop Leader: The narrative listed below appears as Activity Sheet #5 in the Participant Workbook. Tell participants to "just listen to the presentation" because they can refer to the written version later. The developmental considerations under each characteristic can be omitted from the presentation if time is short. In that case, the leader should note that "How these characteristic are implemented will vary depending on the developmental age of the child."

CHARACTERISTICS OF SUCCESSFUL HOME LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS

1. Establishing A Daily Family Routine

Children need regularity and consistency in their lives. Clark (1988) cites individual, in-depth studies of achieving and underachieving twelfth-grade, African-American youngsters in Chicago, and culturally diverse fourth-grade youngsters in Los Angeles, which indicate that children who are academically successful tend to come from families who engage in a regular routine of activities.

Examples:

o Providing time, space, quiet, and materials for child's studying, reading, and hobbies

- Assigning chores and household tasks
- Encouraging good health habits -- proper balance of rest and activity, regular breakfast and dinner schedules, good nutrition, health care as needed
- Eating meals together
- Being firm about regular bedtime

Developmental considerations: As children grow older, parents should gradually allow them to take increasing responsibility for studying and completing homework, performing household chores, and engaging in good health practices. The goal is to encourage children to be self-reliant while at the same time providing structure and rules.

2. Monitoring Out-of-School Activities

Once children are in school, they still spend 70% of their waking hours (including weekends and vacations) outside the school setting (Clark, 1990). This time represents a tremendous learning opportunity which schools and families need to recognize and develop for the student's advantage. Even when out of their parents' view, children can be guided and monitored, particularly by keeping track of the proportion of time that is spent in constructive activity.

Examples:

- Guiding the use of leisure time, so that it is spent in constructive out-of-school activities
- Setting clear rules and standards about appropriate activities
- Setting limits on television use, in both the amount of time permitted each day and the type of programs to be watched
- Calling on other family members or neighbors to watch or check up on children while parents are not at home
- Calling home each afternoon at a specified time to check on child, if parent is at work

Developmental considerations: As children advance through the school system, they should be allowed more choice in out-of-school activities such as arts, music, sports, etc. These activities allow children to pursue their interests and to experience social interactions with peers. Parents need opportunities to get to know their children's friends, as the peer group will become an increasingly important influence on behaviors and attitudes. Monitoring of television viewing should include discussions of programs watched; such discussions could enhance children's critical thinking skills, foster positive parent-child interactions, and increase parents' knowledge regarding the appropriateness of various programs.

NOTE TO PRESENTER: Remind participants of Activity Sheet #6, "Guidelines for Family Television Viewing," in the Participant Workbook.

3. Modeling the Value of Learning and Hard Work

Children learn a tremendous amount by observing and imitating the behavior of others, particularly family members and other adults. Students who value education and understand the connection between success and hard work tend to do better in school (Mayeske, 1973) These values are powerfully influenced by the home environment, but adults need to do more than talk about them. A traditional homily applies here: "However hard we may preach, it is by example that we teach."

Examples:

- Setting an example by reading, writing, and engaging in other learning activities at home
- Using family leisure time productively, such as playing games together where parents demonstrate that planning ahead and problem solving, rather than pure luck, provide success (e.g. Scrabble, Monopoly, Dominoes)
- Establishing a family communication style that values learning by inviting questioning, discussion, and explanation
- Demonstrating that hard work is necessary to achievement, such as by engaging in a family improvement project with visible results
- Using reference materials (e.g. dictionary, Almanac) at home or in the library to answer questions in more depth or for enjoyment
- Volunteering to help at school on a regular basis

Developmental Considerations: As children grow older, they are exposed to other adults, peers, and media figures who may model behavior inconsistent with parental behavior. Older children are not as passive in the process of modeling; they may make a conscious choice to imitate specific individuals other than parents. To guide their children, parents need to model the behavior they hope to instill in their children. Maintaining positive relationships with children also increases the likelihood that children will turn to parents as models. As much as possible, children should be surrounded by other adults and peers who are positive role models.

4. Expressing High but Realistic Expectations for Achievement

Parent expectations for achievement definitely have an influence on the child. Parents who make it clear from an early age that their children should plan on higher education, for example, tend to have children who go on to college. This is not to say that parent expectations should be unrealistically high. Studies have found realistic or accurate parental expectations (i.e. close to the child's actual performance, rather than too high or low) are associated with high performance on cognitive tasks (Scott-Jones, 1984).

Examples:

- Setting goals and standards for child's conduct that are appropriate for their age and level of maturity
- Urging child to work hard in school
- Encouraging effort for long-term gains vs. short-term benefits
- Recognizing and encouraging a child's special talents
- Communicating parents' high expectations for a student's achievement to teachers and asking for suggestions on how to reinforce that message
- Letting family members, friends, and neighbors know when a child is successful in school and voicing expectations for continued achievement

Developmental considerations: As children grow older, they become increasingly aware of others' expectations of them -- teachers and peers as well as parents. Older children engage in social comparison; they decide whether they are better or worse than their classmates on a variety of dimensions, including academic performance. In conveying expectations, it is best to use the child's own past performance, not that of siblings or peers, as a baseline. In general, parents should encourage children to set performance goals that are high, but attainable.

5. Encouraging Child's Overall Development and Progress in School

Children should be treated as winners. Even when children make mistakes, they are not made to feel like losers. Parents (and teachers) who provide frequent verbal support, praising children's skills and efforts, telling them they love and care about them, and using endearing rather than derogatory nicknames, tend to have children with higher self-esteem, who consequently do better in school (Clark, 1990).

Examples:

- Cultivating a warm and supporting home atmosphere
- Affirming personal worth through positive labeling and appreciation of the child as a winner
- Rewarding success and applying sanctions appropriately and consistently
- Showing interest in what the children are learning in school and the talents they are beginning to display
- Expressing affection and approval
- Discussing regularly the value of a good education, possible career options, and necessary life skills
- Noticing and rewarding achievement in school
- Posting children's work on the wall or refrigerator and sending children's poems, artwork, and stories to other family members and friends
- Asking teacher(s) for home learning activities and homework

Developmental considerations: As children grow older, direct physical expressions of affection and approval between parent and child may not occur as frequently. In addition, older children may sometimes judge themselves harshly and assume that parents also have the same negative opinion of them. Children need a constant level of affection and approval, even though hugs and kisses may not be as frequent as in the past. When the child's behavior and performance are not in keeping with parents' expectations, specific feedback regarding how to change or improve, delivered in a positive manner, is more effective than a punitive or derogatory response.

6. Reading, Writing and Discussions among Family Members

A wealth of studies shows that home learning activities such as reading aloud, and frequent, open family discussions are associated with improved student achievement (Leler, 1983; Singer et al., 1988). In a study of 1900 elementary children in London, Tizard and colleagues (1982) found that when schools encouraged children to practice reading at home with parents, they made highly significant gains in reading achievement at school compared to children who practiced only at school with teachers.

Examples:

- Reading to children at a regular time and listening to children read
- Discussions of school day, family members' lives, and current events
- Storytelling, recounting experiences, and sharing problem-solving strategies
- Writing of all kinds (grocery lists, telephone messages, letters, diary entries)
- Using everyday experiences to teach
- Using household activities to teach skills such as counting, sorting, reading, and following instructions (e.g. following a recipe to bake a cake)
- Watching a favorite TV program together and discussing it afterwards

Developmental considerations: As children grow older, parents will spend less time reading aloud and more time listening to the child read, engaging in conversation, and asking questions that require thoughtful answers. Conversations are two-way, and involve listening to children's opinions as well as expressing the adult point of view. Because the peer group increasingly provides opportunities for children to express themselves, parents may lose a powerful connection with their children unless they provide an "ear" and try to understand children's ideas and beliefs.

7. Using Community Resources for Family Needs

As children increasingly plan and develop their own leisure time, parents need to steer them to others adults who can provide guidance, skills, and mentoring. Although these activities occur outside the home, they are, in effect, an extension of the home in that they are "brokered" by parents and serve as a part of the family's overall strategy to create a productive learning environment for their children.

Parents also need to be in close touch with their children's teachers and other school staff, to obtain information about how they might help reinforce at home what the child is learning, and what programs or services, such as tutoring or clubs, are available. Similarly, parents need to be informed about community services and resources that can offer support for families, such as health clinics, employment and training programs, and other human service agencies. Filling basic needs through such supports may be essential before parents are able to fully help their children.

In his studies of achieving ten and eighteen year-olds, Clark (1990) has found that both groups of youth were connected to activities, programs, and relationships that provide opportunities to mediate potentially harmful life conditions. Children need direct and continuing access to people with whom they can develop healthy, helping relationships. For students to be successfully connected to a variety of such mentors, their parents need to help identify and introduce them.

Examples:

- Exposing children to cultural activities (library and museum visits, movies, organized participatory sports)
- Enrolling children in youth enrichment programs, such as after-school sports lessons, community learning programs, museums, or art lessons
- Introducing children to responsible mentors (coaches, counselors, friends, staffs of local organizations)
- Staying in touch with children's teachers and other school staff such as counselors or social workers
- Being aware of and using community services for other family needs
  - Employment and training programs
  - Medical and mental health facilities
  - Human service agencies (housing, recreation, income maintenance)
- Visiting children's school and asking teachers how to help children do better in school
- Participating in religious services and youth groups

Developmental considerations: As children grow older, they increasingly plan and develop their own leisure time activities. Parents need to steer children to other adults whose guidance, skills, and mentoring will support parents' efforts. Appropriate use of community resources, such as the health care system, employment services, and other human service agencies, will help older children learn to negotiate the social system. Parents can also help older children contribute to the community through activities in community centers, churches, and at school.

3. If you've not already done so, call participants' attention to Activity Sheet #5, "Characteristics of Effective Home Learning Environments," which provides a summary of the above presentation. Tell participants that this sheet may contain examples that vary from those offered by the group. Explain that the activity sheet examples are drawn from the research, but that the examples are only suggestive. Participants may wish to add their own ideas to this.

4. **Say:** These characteristics of successful home learning activities can be found in all kinds of families, large or small, rich or poor, mainstream or culturally diverse, and can be developed by all kinds of parents, grandparents, or other family members, regardless of educational level. However, some families may be faced with challenges that make the development and support of effective home learning environments more difficult. After the break, we will discuss how schools can help support successful home learning environments.

Break (10-15 minutes)

Activity #4: Diverse American Families (for longer workshop only)

Objective: The participants will learn about national demographic trends and their implications for families, and become familiar with the obstacles that poverty, unemployment, changes in family patterns, and immigration present to families.

Recommended Time: 45 minutes (use for longer version only)

Directions and Procedures:

1. **Mini-lecture and discussion on demographics (Time: 20 minutes)**

a. Open this presentation by stating: "Economic circumstances, family demands, ethnic and cultural differences in the United States all pose major challenges to families and communities as they try to build supportive and constructive home learning environments for their children. Three dominant influences are:

- Poverty and Unemployment
- Single Parents and Working Mothers
- Immigration and Ethnic Diversity

"Let's look at what is happening in each of these areas and then consider the challenges these trends pose to families involved."

Note to Workshop Leader: The procedure is to show all of the transparencies, note the significance of the trends, and then ask the participants to give examples of the obstacles these trends present to affected families. Fill in with the examples provided if participants seem stumped or miss a major point.

b. **Poverty**

(1) Project T-10, "A Profile of America's Poor Children," on the overhead projector.

A PROFILE OF AMERICA'S POOR CHILDREN

Percent of Poor Children in 1989 Who Were:

White, non-Latino	41
African American	35
Latino	21
Asian or Pacific Islanders	3
Rural	26

Suburban	**29**
Central City	**46**
In Married-couple Families	**38**
In Female-headed Families	**54**
In Male-headed Families	**4**

Source: Children's Defense Fund (1991): Child Poverty in America

(2) Direct participants to **Activity Sheet #7** in their Workbooks, and ask them to consider the following aspects of poverty in the U.S., particularly as it impacts school-age children:

(a) **Poverty is pervasive:** One-fifth (1/5) of American children live in poverty; and over fifty percent of children in single family homes live in poverty (CDF, 1991).
(b) **Poverty in the U.S. is increasing:** In 1979, the nation's poverty rate was 11.7% or 26 million persons. By 1988, the rate had climbed to 13.1% as another 5.8 million people joined the ranks of the poor.
(c) **The national unemployment rate in Summer, 1992 was over 7%,** and higher among minorities.
(d) **Poverty affects all ethnic, cultural, and racial groups.** The largest group of poor children are white. (Point to first block of data displayed on the transparency.)
(e) **The largest proportion of poor children live in cities,** but many low-income children also live in suburbs and in rural areas. Again, call attention to data displayed on transparency.
** (f) In your school(s), the percentage of children on free or reduced lunch is _____. This is the percentage of your students who are considered to be in poverty.
(g) **Most families in poverty are working.** Show T-11, "Poor Families in the Work Force"

Poor Families in the Work Force

Percent of poor families with children in 1989 that had:

At Least One Worker	**63%**
One Worker	**43%**
Two Workers	**17%**
Three Workers	**3%**

Source: Children's Defense Fund, 1991. Child Poverty in America

REMINDER: While poverty has an important influence on families and their children, research indicates that what parents do to help their children learn is more important to academic success than how well off their family is.

(3) Ask participants, **"What are the challenges low-income families face as they try to establish a stable, supportive home learning environment for their children?"** (Write responses from group on chart paper)

Examples:

- Lack of money for basic necessities
- Time pressures for parents working more than one job
- Family health problems
- Lack of community services and resources in low-income neighborhoods
- Violence, drug-dealing, and negative role models in low-income neighborhoods
- Increasing scarcity of safe, affordable housing
- Low literacy skills

c. Single parenthood and working mothers

(1) Let's turn our attention to single-parent (usually female-headed) families. Consider the following dramatic data about the children in these families:

- **Throughout the country, one out of five children currently lives in a one-parent family.**
- **Between one-third and one-half of children born in the 1970's will spend some time living in a single-parent family** (Scott-Jones, 1986)
- ** Approximately _____ % of the children in your school live in a single-parent home.

- Although the results are mixed, research finds that the adverse effects of single parenthood alone on student achievement are generally minimal.
- Much more significant is the low income which typically affects single mothers (Moles, 1992). For lower income and African American families, children tend to do better in school when their mothers work outside the home. (Refer participants to the recommended reading, "A Closer Look at Children in Single-Parent Families, ERIC Digest, 1984.)
- Families headed by single women are more likely to be poor (see

Activity Sheet 7). Show T-12, "Median Income of Families, 1990"

Median Income of Families, 1990

	Single Mother	Married Couple
African-American	$ 11,630	$ 30,650
White	18,946	39,208

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, March 1990 Supplement to Current Population Survey

(2) Another characteristic of family structure that affects school-age children is the increasing number of working mothers.

- **In 1990, 67% of the mothers with children under 18 were in the labor force.** (Current Population Survey, U.S. Bureau of the Census, March, 1990).
- Since 1970, the entry rate of mothers into the labor force has risen rapidly. For all groups of mothers, including those with children under 6, labor-force participation rates (including full- and part-time work) are over fifty percent. This means that in no **segment of society are working women any longer in the minority** (Milne, 1989). Refer to Activity Sheet 7.

(3) Ask participants, **"What difficulties do single parent families and working mothers face in trying to develop successful home learning environments for their children?"** (Write responses from group on chart paper)

Examples:

Working and Single Parents

- Scarcity of decent, affordable childcare
- Lack of properly supervised activities for children before and after school
- Time pressures from competing work and family demands
- Fatigue and lack of energy

Single Parents

- o Greater difficulty establishing and maintaining family routine
- o Fewer extended family members for assistance
- o Lower family income

d. Immigration and Ethnic Diversity

(1) *Show T-13, "Trends in Immigration and Ethnic Diversity,"* and tell participants that another trend changing the composition of American families is the new wave of immigration. Review each point.

TRENDS IN IMMIGRATION AND ETHNIC DIVERSITY

- **More than 14 million immigrants came to the US in the 1980's**
- **80% of new immigrants came from Latin America and Asia**
- **By the year 2000, 1 out of 3 Americans will be of non-European origin**
- **In the year 2000, 43% of new workers will be immigrants or native born minorities**

Source: Hodgkinson, "The Right Schools for the Right Kids," 1989.

(2) Ask participants to consider the following:

- o The wave of immigration to the U.S. in the 1980's is comparable in this century only to the 1920's.
- o Unlike earlier waves of immigration, this one is not predominantly European; instead 80% come from Latin America and Asia.
- o If trends continue, by the year 2000 nearly one-third of the U.S. population will not be of European origin.
- o In the year 2000, nearly half the new workers will be immigrants or native-born "minorities" (Hodgkinson, 1989)
- ** o In your school, approximately ____ % of the students receive ESL services. (NOTE TO LEADERS: Provide the most descriptive data available on ethnic composition of participants' school.)

(3) Summary: The U.S. is growing increasingly culturally diverse. Schools must balance their traditional role of "assimilating" children into the mainstream European-American culture with the need to recognize the value and contributions of other cultures. Not only must new arrivals to the U.S. be taught about mainstream expectations for behavior and

performance, but those in the mainstream must learn how to accommodate and respect people from other cultures, not just in school, but also increasingly in the workplace.

(4) Ask participants: **"What are the obstacles that immigrant families may encounter in their efforts to establish an effective home learning environment?"** Write responses on chart paper.

Examples:

- Culture at home is different from that of outside environment
- Dissonance between values of "new culture" (i.e. U.S. culture) and traditional values brought from homeland
- Difficulty in communicating with school due to differences in language, norms, self-consciousness
- Language spoken at home is not English, making acculturation more difficult

e. Summarize the obstacles faced by parents in diverse families. Stress to participants that the main reason for considering these demographic data was to enhance awareness of the diversity of families in our school community and to encourage increased sensitivity to the obstacles faced by many.

For example, low literacy skills and proverty often go hand in hand. Schools with a substantial low-income population need to be sensitive to both the form and format of communications. Also, parents with low literacy skills need access to oral information on child development, parenting and available social services, because it is ususally only available in print.

Hand out Activity Sheets A-8, A-9, and A-10, "Checksheets on Low Income, Single Parent, and Immigrant Families." Remind participants that they can jot their ideas from the workshop down on these pages.

Next, we'll explore ways that schools can help all families enhance their home learning environments.

2. Discussion of Cultural Patterns and Strengths of Diverse Families (Time: 25 minutes)

a. The purpose of this last discussion is to enrich participant understanding of the particular populations served by their school(s). As workshop leader, you'll need to tailor this section, using the demographic data you've collected on the school(s) and readings contained in the Appendix which are referenced below.

b. From the articles contained in the Appendix, select **two or four** (depending on the size and composition of your group), each on a different ethnic, cultural, or racial group, as appropriate for the schools and interests of your audience.

Recommended:
Siobhan Nicolau, "Schools Helping Poor Hispanic Parents Strengthen Home Learning"
Quality Education for Minorities, "Black Americans"
Sau-Fong Sui, "The Chinese American Experience"
John Tsuchida, "Southeast Asians"
Susan Swap and Jean Krasnow, "The Irish American Experience"
Nitza Hidalgo, "The Puerto Rican Experience"

Make copies in advance for each participant.

As an example, Nicolau highlights the unique traits of Hispanic parents that are linked to their cultural norms and values; illustrates how the behaviors which grow out of these traits are oftentimes misinterpreted by those who are not knowledgeable and sensitive to the nature of these differences; and points out the strengths inherent in Hispanic parents and families. She also outlines specific strategies that schools can use to work with Hispanic parents in strengthening the home learning environment for Hispanic children. The other articles present similar information.

c. Divide the participants into four "committees." (You could have them count off 1-4; or group them according to the schools they represent; or use other criteria you think appropriate) If you have selected four articles, give copies of a different one to each committee; if you have selected two articles, give two committees copies of one and two committees copies of the other. Give the committees this assignment: **"We are now going to do some research on major ethnic, racial, and cultural groups. Each committee is to read their assigned paper and develop a short report to present to the other committees. The report will be in two sections: (1) strengths and resources of the families in this ethnic/cultural group, and (2) specific ways that schools can support these families. For reference, be sure to check the posted chart papers on successful home learning environments and on challenges families face. Take ten minutes to read your paper and develop a short report."**

d. Ask committees to pair up (e.g. 1 with 2; 3 with 4). If only two articles have been reviewed, each group should meet with one that considered a different article. If four articles have been used, the pairings will be done twice. Each committee will then report to the other, and invite comments (five minutes each).

e. After the last reporting, ask one person from each pair of groups to report on the most significant findings. Use these reports to debrief the activity.

You are also encouraged to remind participants of the recommended reading, "A Closer Look at Children in Single-Parent Families," and to draw upon the following ERIC Digest pieces if they are relevant: "Parent Involvement and The Education of Limited-English-Proficient Students" and "Family Lives and Parental Involvement in Migrant Students' Education," both of which are in the Appendix. Again, these short pieces may be reproduced for distribution to all participants if highly relevant.

B-35

Activity #5: How Schools Can Help Families Build More Successful Learning Environments

Objective: The participants will identify resources that schools can provide and strategies schools can use to help families build successful home learning environments.

Recommended Time: 25 minutes - long and short versions

Directions and Procedures:

1. Ask participants to number off, 1-7, to form 7 small groups; then project T-9, "Characteristics of Successful Home Learning Environments," on the screen. Instruct each small group to work with the characteristic that matches their group number.

The small group task is to generate strategies and identify resources that their school and teacher(s) can use to help families, particularly those facing obstacles, build a successful home learning environment. Obstacles for families might include low income, single parenthood, both parents working and/or ethnic and cultural differences. Although participants should be encouraged to draw upon their experience as they complete this activity, they can also use the recommended reading, "Improving the School-Home Connection for Low-Income Urban Parents" (ERIC Digest, 1988).

Provide each group with a felt tip pen and flip chart paper, and tell them to assign a recorder to write down group's ideas for reporting out. Request that recorders write large enough for viewing by whole group. ***Allocate 10 minutes for this assignment.***

To get groups started, or to contribute to the discussion, here are some ideas that are also presented on Activity Sheet #11.

Suggested Strategies and Resources:

1. **Establishing a Daily Family Routine**

o Develop a regular homework policy, spelling out how much time a night students should spend, and giving assignments that can be completed in that amount of time. Share this with families.

o Send home a school calendar at the beginning of the year, and update it each month (including test dates), so that families can plan ahead for school events and tests.

- o Establish regular routines for the classroom, so that families know what to expect and can set their schedules accordingly. Send home a folder of each child's work the same day each week.

2. Monitoring Out-of-School Activities

- o Have classes make up personal time management calendars, so that students can analyze how they are spending their after-school and weekend time. Include guidelines for time-use, e.g. 1 hour of television, 2 hours of homework, 1 hour of chores. Ask parents to review and sign off.
- o Contact local organizations for information on youth programs in the neighborhood. Post information in school office, plus copy and send home. Arrange with local organizations for sign-up opportunities at school.
- o Send home newsletters or flyers with guidelines and suggestions for constructive use of television (see Activity Sheet 6)
- o If after-school programs are scarce, work with PTA/PTO and local groups such as churches to develop some

3. Modeling the Value of Learning and Hard Work

- o Suggest or send home educational activities for the whole family, e.g. rules for games such as "Twenty Questions" or "Categories."
- o Set up a family reference library at school where families can use or borrow materials. Hold family nights at the school library.
- o Invite parents and other adults to the classroom to read to children and share their skills and knowledge.
- o Give parents suggestions for summer activities to reinforce and extend learning, such as places to visit and things to do.

4. Expressing High but Realistic Expectations for Achievement

- o In parent-teacher conferences, always begin with a positive statement about the student. Suggest parents encourage child by rewarding improved achievement with special time or outing with parents.

- Find ways to recognize and reward all children, not just those who are high achieving or well-behaved.
- Provide information about careers and post-secondary education opportunities; make sure it reaches all children.

5. Encouraging Child's Overall Development and Progress in School

- Provide weekly information reports on student work for parents to sign and return with child.
- Hold social events, such as pot luck dinners or picnics, for parents to get to know principal and teachers. Ask more active parents to reach out to those who are less involved. Make sure every parent feels welcome and valued.
- Hold a beginning of the year orientation for parents to explain the school's educational program, the curriculum, and expectations for students.
- Make regular home visits or telephone calls to families.

6. Reading, Writing and Discussions Among Family Members

- Have students interview their parents and relatives about how life has changed since their childhood. Compile interviews into a "Family Memory Book."
- Lend families books their children have especially liked.
- Send home packets of materials to start a home library.
- Give a demonstration at a parent group meeting or workshop on how to read with your child.
- Develop homework assignments that involve family members, such as writing an account of family holiday traditions.

7. Using Community Resources

- Distribute to each family a directory of local community services.

B-38

- Invite representatives of community organizations to attend and set up information tables at school get-togethers or events.
- Provide application forms for voter registration, youth programs, community services, in the school office. Arrange for presentations on these services at school events and community centers.

2. Facilitate reporting out and large group sharing. Ask recorders/reporters to post products at designated spots on wall around room, and allow small groups to move, in turn, from the 1st through the 7th stations. To vary this activity, you might ask each participant to "vote," by placing a hashmark beside the #1 strategy in each category that seems most exemplary. At the culmination of the viewing, you could highlight the strategies receiving the "most votes" in each category.

If time is short, facilitate fast-paced reporting out by each of the 7 recorder/reporters. In this event, take care that reporters keep their remarks to 1 minute or less.

Pass out Activity Sheet #11. Participants can use it to take notes of the ideas they liked best.

Allocate 7-10 minutes for this sharing.

3. Bring closure to this activity by making the point that when schools help parents develop home learning activities:

- Children see continuity between home and school.
- Parents learn new ways to interact with children.
- Parents are kept informed about what is being taught at school.
- Parents and teachers collaborate for the benefit of the child.

Note that supports from schools and teachers will be explored in more depth in the following workshops. This exercise was meant to encourage participants to begin seeking new ways to help parents.

Activity #6: Summary, Next Steps and Evaluation

Objective: The participants will reflect upon their learnings in this workshop, commit to completing assigned activities prior to Workshop 2, and complete a workshop evaluation form.

Recommended Time: 15 minutes

Directions and Procedures:

1. Conclude this workshop by summarizing the following points:

   (a) Project T-2, **"Schools and Families Together Workshops"** on the screen. Remind participants that the goal of this workshop series is to help teachers and administrators work more effectively with all parents to strengthen home learning environments that promote student achievement. This sourcebook takes the position that in order to strengthen home learning, schools and families need to work together as equal partners.

   (b) This first workshop presented an overview both of the characteristics of home learning environments that promote student achievement, and the types of constraints and challenges faced by families as they develop and maintain these environments. But, knowing what families can do to promote home learning environments is just part of the picture. The other important part is what schools can do to support families in their efforts. The last activity opened the door to exploring some strategies educators can use in supporting home learning environments. Ask participants to reflect on the objectives of this workshop and the extent to which they feel they achieved each. ***Project T-4, "Learner Objectives" on the screen, and allow 3-5 minutes for participant comment and reflection.***

   1. **Recognize the strengths inherent in families.**
   2. **Explain the connection between the home learning environment and student achievement.**
   3. **Identify the components of strong home learning environments**
   4. **Recognize obstacles to building strong home learning environments and the resources schools can provide**

(c) During the balance of this workshop series, we'll focus more specifically on the types of programs, activities, and practices that schools engage in to promote (or hinder) the development of home-school partnerships and to support (or neglect) home learning environments.

In the next workshop, we'll begin looking specifically at school level practice. Schoolwide guidelines, programs and practices are essential and necessary to the development of effective home-school partnerships that foster family involvement both at school and in school-related learning activities for children at home.

(d) In preparation for this workshop, participants are asked to read "Hard-to-reach parents: what administrators and teachers should know about working with special populations" (Olmsted, 1989), also found in the Workbook.

2. Ask participants to turn to the last page in their Workbooks, the Participants Evaluation Form, and complete this form to leave with you as they depart. Thank them for their participation, and remind them of the date and time for the next workshop.

3. Soon after the workshop complete the Workshop Leader's Evaluation Form. Then summarize the participants' reactions on the Leader's Summary of the Participant Evaluation Forms. Both are at the end of this guide. Send all completed forms to the project director (name and address are listed on Summary Form.)

B-41

PARTICIPATING SCHOOL CHARACTERISTICS

Schools and Families Together Workshops

Please provide a brief description of your school below. This will be used to help us decide how appropriate the workshops are for different kinds of schools and educators. This information will only be used for revising the workshops and no reports will identify individual schools.

Name of school: ______________________ Sch.district ___________

Grades served: ____________ Average size of classes: ________

Students: Total number: __________
_____ percent on free or reduced price lunch
_____ percent receiving special education services
_____ percent receiving ESL or Title VII services
_____ percent receiving Chapter I services
_____ percent receiving migrant Chapter I services
percent who are:
- _____ African American
- _____ White
- _____ Hispanic
- _____ Asian
- _____ other (specify) ____________________________

_____ average daily attendance
_____ percent of students reading one year or more below their grade level (estimate)

Faculty: Total number _____
_____ number of administrators
_____ number of full time classroom teachers
_____ number of other professionals
_____ number of paraprofessional staff (teacher aides, tutors, etc.)
_____ number of other support staff

Parents:

What level of parent involvement does this school have:
low_____ moderate_____ high_____

What kinds of training or workshops do you provide for parents?

____

____

List all parent organizations (PTA, Chapter I advisory committee, etc.)

OVER PLEASE

B-42

Do parents volunteer in classrooms? Yes____ No ____ If yes, about how many?

Are there other kinds of parent involvement activities that are particularly successful in this school? If yes, please describe them.

____

____

School Programs:

_____ before or after school programs
_____ bussing for racial balance
_____ magnet programs (specify kind and number of students)

____

_____ other enrichment activities (specify kind and number of students)

____

____

Community:

Does your school have any community-school partnerships? yes___ no___ If yes, please explain.

____

____

What kinds of resources are available in the community that might support home learning (e.g. libraries, museums, community centers)?

____

____

Are adult education or adult enrichment services available in the community? yes___ no___ If yes, please describe.

____

____

Please return this form to the workshop leader before the day of the workshop. Thank you.

WORKSHOP LEADERS EVALUATION FORM

Building Home-School Partnerships for Learning

Leader's Name: ________________________ Date Given: _____

Name of Workshop: ________________ Amount of Time Used: ____

School District: __________________________ State: _____

1. What was the most successful aspect of this workshop? Why?

2. What was the least successful? Why?

3. Did you change or cut out any parts of this workshop? If yes (a) which parts, b) what changes did you make, and (c) why did you change or cut them?

4. If this workshop is revised, what should be changed about:
   a. instructions in leader's guide

   b. workbook materials

   c. times allotted to activities

5. Other comments? Please continue on other side.

Thank you for giving us your thoughts on your experience with this workshop. May we have your phone number in case we need further information? Phone: ________________

B-44

LEADER'S SUMMARY OF PARTICIPANT EVALUATION FORMS

Leader's Name: ____________________

Name of Workshop: ____________________ Date Given: _____

School(s): ____________________ District: __________

Estimate number of participants: male _____ and female _____

Estimate number who were
_____ African American
_____ White
_____ Hispanic
_____ Asian American
_____ other (specify) ____________________

Participants in this workshop consisted of (check all that apply):

_____ staff from a single school
_____ staff from several different schools within one school district
_____ staff from schools in several school districts
_____ school district officials and/or staff
_____ others: (specify) ____________________

Please summarize the last question from the Participant Evaluation Form by entering the total number of:

_____ K-3 grade teachers
_____ 4-6 grade teachers
_____ principals
_____ other school site professionals
_____ school district officials and/or staff members
_____ parents
_____ others

On a blank form please list all themes that are repeated across participants on the open-ended questions. (Read answers to one question at a time to detect common themes.) If your time does not permit this, we will summarize this information. It is more important to get all the forms back quickly.

Please send us this form, your own Leader's Evaluation Form, and all Participant Evaluation Forms. Mail to:

Oliver Moles, Project Director
Office of Research, OERI, U.S. Department of Education
555 New Jersey Ave., NW
Washington, DC 20208-5649 **Phone: (202) 219-2211**

FAMILIES AS LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS

TRANSPARENCIES

T-1	Key Concept
T-2	Building Home-School Partnerships for Learning: Workshops for Urban Educators
T-3	Key Terms
T-4	Learner Objectives
T-5	Benefits of Parent Involvement for Students
T-6	Benefits of Parent Involvement for Parents
T-7	Benefits of Parent Involvement for Teachers and Schools
T-8	Strengths of Families
T-9	Characteristics of Successful Home Learning Environments
T-10	A Profile of America's Poor Children
T-11	Poor Families in the Work Force
T-12	Median Income of Families
T-13	Trends in Immigration and Ethnic Diversity

T-1

KEY CONCEPT

Every family functions
as a home learning environment,
regardless of its structure,
economic level,
ethnic or cultural background.

Consequently, every family
has the potential
to support and improve
the academic achievement
of its children.

T-2

BUILDING HOME-SCHOOL PARTNERSHIPS FOR LEARNING:

WORKSHOPS FOR URBAN EDUCATORS

WORKSHOP 1: Families as Learning Environments

WORKSHOP 2: School Programs and Practices

WORKSHOP 3: Communication Skills and Strategies

WORKSHOP 4: Homework and Home Learning Activities

WORKSHOP 5: School District Policies and Supports (designed for those developing and revising policies on home-school partnerships)

T-3

KEY TERMS

HOME-SCHOOL PARTNERSHIPS

- **Mutual Trust and Respect**
- **Two-Way Collaboration and Support**
- **Equality in the Relationship**
- **Schools Take the Initiative**
- **Activities for Student Success**

HOME LEARNING ACTIVITIES

- **Homework**
- **Home Learning Activities Suggested by Teachers**
- **Home Learning Activities Initiated by Families**

6-49

LEARNER OBJECTIVES

1. Understand the connection between the home learning environment and student achievement.

2. Recognize the strengths inherent in families.

3. Identify the components of strong home learning environments.

4. Recognize obstacles to building strong home learning environments and the resources schools can provide.

T-5

BENEFITS OF PARENT INVOLVEMENT FOR STUDENTS

- **Academic Achievement Rises**
- **Behavior Improves**
- **Motivation Increases**
- **Attendance Becomes More Regular**
- **Dropout Rates Fall**
- **Attitudes About Homework Become More Positive**
- **Parent and Community Support Increases**

T-6

BENEFITS OF PARENT INVOLVEMENT FOR PARENTS

- Receive Ideas from School on How to Help Children
- Learn More About Educational Program and How the School Works
- Become More Supportive of Children
- Become more confident about ways to help children learn

B-52

T-7

BENEFITS OF PARENT INVOLVEMENT FOR TEACHERS AND SCHOOLS

- Teacher Morale Improves
- Parents Rate Teachers Higher
- Student Achievement Improves
- Parents Support Schools

B-53

T-8

STRENGTHS OF FAMILIES

- **As First Teachers, Parents have Opportunities to Model and Guide.**
- **Parents Know Their Children Better than Anyone Else Does.**
- **Parents are interested in their children's education and want them to succeed.**
- **Most Parents Want to Work with Schools to Benefit their Children.**

T-9

CHARACTERISTICS OF SUCCESSFUL HOME LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS

1. **Establishing a Daily Family Routine**
2. **Monitoring Out-of-School Activities**
3. **Modeling the Value of Learning and Hard Work**
4. **Encouraging Child's Overall Development and Progress in School**
5. **Expressing High but Realistic Expectations for Achievement**
6. **Reading, Writing and Discussions among Family Members**
7. **Using Community Resources for Family Needs**

B-55

T-10

A PROFILE OF AMERICA'S POOR CHILDREN

Percent of Poor Children in 1989 Who Were:

White, non-Latino	41
African American	35
Latino	21
Asian or Pacific Islander	3
Rural	26
Suburban	29
Central City	46
In Married-couple families	38
In female-headed families	54
In male-headed families	4

Source: Children's Defense Fund (1991). Child Poverty in America.

B-56

T-11

POOR FAMILIES IN THE WORK FORCE

Percent of Poor Families with Children in 1989 with:

At least one worker	**63%**
One worker	**43%**
Two workers	**17%**
Three or more workers	**3%**

Source: Children's Defense Fund (1991). Child Poverty in America.

T-12

MEDIAN INCOME OF FAMILIES, 1990

	Single Mother	Married Couple
African-American	$ 11,630	$ 30,650
White	18,946	39,208

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, *March '90 Supplement to Current Population Survey.*

B-58

T-13

TRENDS IN IMMIGRATION AND ETHNIC DIVERSITY

- **More than 14 million immigrants came to the U. S. in the 1980's.**
- **80% of "new immigrants" came from Latin America and Asia.**
- **By year 2000, 1 out of 3 Americans will be of non-European origin.**
- **In year 2000, 43% of new workers will be immigrants or native-born minorities.**

Source: Hodgkinson, 1989: "The Right Schools for the Right Kids," Community Education Journal XVI (4) Summer: 6-9.

BUILDING HOME-SCHOOL PARTNERSHIPS FOR LEARNING: WORKSHOPS FOR URBAN EDUCATORS (PILOT VERSION)

FAMILIES AS LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS

PARTICIPANT WORKBOOK

Preworkshop Readings:

1. "Improving the School-home Connection for Low-income Urban Parents"
2. "Curriculum of the Home"
3. "A Closer Look at Children in Single-parent Families"

Activity Sheets

1 Learner Objectives & Key Concept
2 Key Terms and Definitions
3 Benefits of Parent Involvement
4 Strengths of Families
5 Characteristics of Successful Home Learning Environments
6 Guidelines for Family Television Viewing
7 A Profile of American Families
8 Checksheet on Low Income Families
9 Checksheet on Single Parent Families & Families with Women Working
10 Checksheet on Immigrant Families
11 Teacher Strategies to Help Parents Develop Successful Home Learning Environments

Readings and Resources

References

Assignment: To read before School Programs and Practices workshop

"Hard-to-reach Parents: What Administrators and Teachers Should Know about Working with Special Populations"

Participant Evaluation Form

Pre-workshop Reading 1

B-60

ERIC
CLEARINGHOUSE ON URBAN EDUCATION

DIGEST

Number 41, March 1988

ISSN 0889 8049

IMPROVING THE SCHOOL-HOME CONNECTION FOR LOW-INCOME URBAN PARENTS

The importance of a child's home, and parent participation in school activities, to learning is undisputed. Therefore, it is unfortunate that the poor achievement of low-income urban students has often coexisted with a perceived lack of parent interest in schooling, creating a tendency to lift the burden of these children's academic failure from the schools by blaming their parents' lack of involvement in education. In fact, conversely, low-income parents can and want to help with their children's schooling—both at home and at school. Thus, teachers and other school staff need reach out to parents in ways they can respond to, and help them help their children.

The Low-Income Urban Parent

Poverty weighs most heavily on urban children. Most of these poor urban children live in the growing number of single parent, female-headed households, where low wages and unemployment make life an increasing economic battle. Among blacks and Hispanics living in poor urban neighborhoods, the proportion of female-headed families is particularly high.

Even when a man is present in the household, families are increasingly comprised of children with more than one parental relationship. Since many mothers of school-age children are in the work force, not only stepmothers, but custodial mothers, and a variety of paid helpers, are all part of the complicated and imperfect patchwork of childcare.

School-Based Activities and Single and Working Parents

Research suggests that the more parents participate in schooling, in a sustained way, at every level—in advocacy, decision-making and oversight roles, as fundraisers and boosters, as volunteers and paraprofessionals, and as home teachers—the better for student achievement (Gordon, 1978). However, given the pressures of daily life on urban parents, a number of questions are raised about whether schools can engage poor, single, or working parents, who may be busier or have more troubled households than middle-class parents.

Understandably, educators, whose own time and resources are limited, are wary about expending insufficient effort in generating parent involvement. Yet, school personnel tend to decide in advance that single and working parents cannot be approached or relied on (Epstein, 1984, March). Though there may be a vast distance between parents' worry or concern and their actually reaching out, single working parents as well as dual working parent families are especially likely to want more contact and consultation with teachers, and they are as dissatisfied as the teachers about any loss of contact (The Metropolitan Life Survey, 1987).

In both dual working parent and single working parent families, parents' involvement in school activities is usually partly related to the flexibility of leave policies on their jobs. While most employers are still rigid about the time and hours they demand of their workers, they can be encouraged to allow flextime for working parents, and to extend short leaves beyond emergencies, so that parents can observe their children in the classroom or attend meetings (Espinosa, R., 1985). Where a corporation employs a large number of parents, times can actually be arranged with the employer for parent-teacher conferences and school meetings. These employer-school collaborations humanize the work place, increasing productivity along with employee morale as they make clear the employer's commitment to the next generation of workers.

Improving School-Based Participation

To generate better communication between schools and single and working parents, schools can be encouraged to move in a number of directions (Rich, 1985):

- be sensitive to parents' scheduling difficulties, and announce meetings and other events long enough in advance for parents to arrange for time off from work;
- create a more accepting environment for working and single parents, as well as those undergoing separation, divorce, or remarriage, or acting as a custodial parent;
- schedule teacher-parent-counselor evening meetings, with childcare;
- allow open-enrollment so that children can attend schools near parents' work places;
- provide before-school and after-school care;
- be careful about cancelling school at the last minute because of weather conditions, and leaving working parents with no resources for the care of their children;
- facilitate teen, single, working, and custodial parent peer support groups;
- provide both legal and custodial parents with regular information on their child's classroom activities, and any assistance they may need to become involved with the child's learning.

Home-Based Learning and Single and Working Parents

When parents' time for school involvement is limited, home-based learning is said to be one of the most efficient ways for parents to spend their time (Walbert, 1985). Nevertheless, teachers tend to favor parents who come to school, thus creating a cycle of positive reinforcement that leads to gains for those children whose parents come to school and shuts out parents (and their children) who are afraid or unable to do so (Toomey, 1986). Home-based learning breaks into this cycle and helps those who need help the most.

In fact, low-income single and working parents often *can* and *do* spend as much time helping their children at home as do middle-class parents with more education and leisure (Epstein, 1984, March). As with school-based involvement, it can be the teachers who hesitate to give these children work to take home, wrongly fearing that the parents will not be available to help. However, when teachers reach out to parents, these parents are generally more than willing to help. More impressive, when teachers *help parents to help their children*, these parents can be as effective with their children as those parents with more education and leisure, whom teachers expect to help their children (Epstein, 1984, April).

The Best Ways to Help Children at Home

Recent research on parental involvement in home learning differs about how the home and school should relate. While some researchers emphasize changing what goes on in the low-income or minority home in order to create learning situations that are more consistent with school learning (Walbert, 1984; Grau, Weinstein, & Walberg, 1983), others focus more on what can be done to increase teachers' understanding of the "natural" learning that goes on in any low-income home (Brice-Heath, 1983), or even to help these families help "empower" each other (Cochran, 1987). One author concludes that the "school-to-home pathway . . . is more likely to be effective if the two-way nature of the path is explicitly recognized by educators" (Cole & Griffin, 1987).

A first step in fostering home learning is letting parents know that there are simple, time-efficient ways to help their children. This can be done in a variety of ways (Rich, 1985):

- bilingual media campaign on the important role of the home in educating children;
- support for home learning from ministers and other respected leaders;
- family learning centers in schools, storefronts, and churches that offer help (bilingual, when necessary) to parents wanting to help their children learn;
- bilingual hot-lines for parents who need help in helping their children with their homework; and
- school-designed learning activities that parents and their children can do together.

Enhanced Schooling through Parent Involvement

Home-learning projects are critical for many low-income families who do not automatically give their children the assistance and stimulation necessary for success in school. Although both schools and parents must be inventive to increase parent involvement, it is important to keep in mind that every activity a child engages in can be enriching, and that the time children spend at home with their parents can be made as educational as the time they spend in school.

—Carol Ascher

References

Brice Heath, S. (1983). *Way with words.* New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.

Cochran, M. (1987, Fall). The parental empowerment process: Building on family strengths. *Equity & Choice, 4* (1), 9-23.

Cole, M., & Griffin, P. (1987). *Contextual factors in education: Improving science and mathematics education for minorities and women.* Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin, Wisconsin Center for Educational Research.

Epstein, J. (1984, March). *Single parents and the schools: The effect of marital status on parent and teacher evaluations.* Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University, Center for Social Organization of Schools.

Epstein, J.L. (1984, April). *Effects of teacher practices of parental involvement on change in student achievement in reading and math.* Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, April 1984. ED 256-863

Espinosa, R. (1985, November 30). *Working parents project. Final report (December 1, 1984-November 30, 1985).* Austin, TX: Southwest Educational Development Lab. ED 266-871

Gordon, I. (1978). *What does research say about the effects of parent involvement on schooling?* Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

Grau, M.E., Weinstein, T., & Walberg, H.J. (1983). School-based home instruction and learning: A quantitative synthesis, *Journal of Educational Research, 76,* 351-360.

The Metropolitan Life Survey (1987). *The American teacher, 1987: Strengthening links between home and school.* New York, NY: Louis Harris and Associates, Inc.

Rich, D. (1985). *The forgotten factor in school success: The family. A Policymaker's guide.* Washington, D.C.: The Home & School Institute, Inc.

Toomey, D. (1986, February). *Home-school relations and inequality in education.* School of Education, La Trobe University, Melbourne, Australia. Address given to a Conference on Education and the Family, Brigham Young University.

Walberg, H.J. Families as partners in educational productivity, *Phi Delta Kappan, 65* (6), 397-400.

ERIC® Clearinghouse on Urban Education
Institute for Urban and Minority Education
Box 40
Teachers College, Columbia University
New York, NY 10027
(212) 678-3433
Erwin Flaxman, Director
Wendy Schwartz, Editor

ERIC/CUE Digests draw together and summarize key information on current educational issues. Occasionally a Digest is devoted to a single report or study that is of major importance. Single copies of the **Digests** are available free from the ERIC Clearinghouse on Urban Education if the request is accompanied by a stamped self-addressed envelope. Please write to the Clearinghouse for permission to reproduce.

This Digest was developed by the ERIC Clearinghouse on Urban Education with funding from Office of Educational Research and Improvement, U.S. Department of Education, under contract no. R188062013. The opinions expressed in this Digest do not necessarily reflect the position or policies of OERI or the Department of Education.

Office of Educational Research and Improvement U.S. Department of Education

Pre-workshop Reading 2

WHAT WORKS

Research About Teaching and Learning

Curriculum of the Home page 7

Research Finding: **Parents are their children's first and most influential teachers. What parents do to help their children learn is more important to academic success than how well-off the family is.**

Comment: Parents can do many things at home to help their children succeed in school. Unfortunately, recent evidence indicates that many parents are doing much less than they might. For example, American mothers on average spend less than half an hour a day talking, explaining, or reading with their children. Fathers spend less than 15 minutes.

They can create a "curriculum of the home" that teaches their children what matters. They do this through their daily conversations, household routines, attention to school matters, and affectionate concern for their children's progress.

Conversation is important. Children learn to read, reason, and understand things better when their parents:
- read, talk, and listen to them,
- tell them stories, play games, share hobbies, and
- discuss news, TV programs, and special events.

In order to enrich the "curriculum of the home," some parents:
- provide books, supplies, and a special place for studying,
- observe routine for meals, bedtime, and homework, and
- monitor the amount of time spent watching TV and doing after-school jobs.

Parents stay aware of their children's lives at school when they:
- discuss school events,
- help children meet deadlines, and
- talk with their children about school problems and successes.

Research on both gifted and disadvantaged children shows that home efforts can greatly improve student achievement. For example, when parents of disadvantaged children take the steps listed above, their children can do as well at school as the children of more affluent families.

References: DiPrete, T. A. (1981). *Discipline, Order, and Student Behavior in American High Schools.* Chicago: National Opinion Research Center. ERIC Document No. ED 224137.

Graue, M. E., Weinstein, T., and Walberg, H. J. (1983). "School-based Home Instruction and Learning: A Quantitative Synthesis." *Journal of Educational Research*, Vol. 76, pp. 351-360.

Gray, S. T. (1984). "How to Create a Successful School/Community Partnership." *Phi Delta Kappan*, Vol. 65, No. 6, pp. 405-409.

Walberg, H. J. (1984). "Families as Partners in Educational Productivity." *Phi Delta Kappan*, Vol. 65, No. 6, pp. 397-400.

Walberg, H. J. (1984). "Improving the Productivity of America's Schools." *Educational Leadership*, Vol. 41, No. 8, pp. 19-27.

United States Department of Education
William J. Bennett, Secretary
1986

B-63

Pre-workshop Reading 3

ERIC®

Clearinghouse on Urban Education
Institute for Urban and Minority Education / Box 40
Teachers College / Columbia University
New York, New York 10027

(212) 678-3437

ERIC/CUE Digest Number 23

June 1984

A Closer Look at Children in Single-Parent Families

For generations educators have assumed that children living with one parent have more trouble in school than children from two-parent families. As the number of single-parent families has grown, so has concern about the well being of their children. This concern has given rise to new research a well as to reexaminations of work conducted during the 1960s and 1970s. These new studies indicate that the situation is much more complex than originally thought. The experience of living in a single-parent home varies greatly according to a large number of factors. While statistics are helpful as at-risk indicators, day-to-day dealings with students should be guided by strong consideration of the particular circumstances of the individual child.

Profile of Single-Parent Families

Recent census figures and research data indicate the single-parent family is typically headed by a working mother, and in comparison to the two-parent family has fewer financial resources and tends to relocate more often (8, 9, 13).

Figures also show that the number of such families is burgeoning. The ranks of single-parent families swelled to more than 70% in the last decade, from 11% of all families in 1970 to 19% in 1979. Among black families the statistics are even more striking: nearly 45% of families are headed by one parent. Among white families, 14% are single-parent, and among Spanish-speaking families, 27% are single-parent. Overall, one-parent families are more prevalent in American cities than in rural areas: 1982 figures show that 20% of families living in standard metropolitan areas are single-parent, compared with 15% in nonmetropolitan areas (13).

Throughout the country, 12 million children—one out of five—are now living in one-parent families, and a million more are being added to that total each year. Female-headed families, which comprise 9 out of 10 one-parent families, are increasing 10 times as quickly as two-parent families (8). The Bureau of Census estimates that 45% of all children born today in this country will spend at least a year living with one parent (10).

The typical three-person family headed by a single mother operates on an average yearly income of $7,035—just a little more than a third of the average income ($20,400) of the typical four-person family headed by a father and mother (9). Partly because of reduced income that results from removal of one parent, usually the father, single-parent families tend to relocate more often. A 1980 longitudinal study (8) of 26 schools in 14 states found that one-parent families with elementary school children tend to relocate twice as frequently as two-parent families; at the secondary level the ratio was three to one (8).

In addition to being more mobile, women heading single-parent families are often employed outside the home. Among female-headed families with school-age children, 72% of the women are employed, compared with 59% employment among mothers in two-parent families (4).

Are Single-Parent Children At-Risk in School?

Early research has indicated that children from single-parent families scored significantly lower on achievement tests, had more behavioral problems in school, and received lower teacher-assigned grades than did children in two-parent families (3). However, recent work reexamining earlier research for methodological and statistical adequacy tempers some of these findings and concludes that single-parent children are at less academic risk than previously thought (3, 11, 14).

Hetherington et al. (3) in a review of 58 studies, found the differences between children in one- and two-parent families on tests of intelligence and aptitude are usually small and become less significant when socioeconomic status is considered. They note the difference in IQ between children in single- and two-parent families is smaller than the difference in teacher-assigned grades and postulate that the greater disparity in grades may be due to

- teachers perceiving students who do not conform to school routines and requirements as less competent
- students' functioning in school being affected by home conditions surrounding separation and divorce
- children having less time for homework because of household and child-care tasks.

Newer studies do, however, confirm earlier findings regarding the behavior of single-parent children. Researchers generally agree that, in relation to two-parent children, one-parent children

- are absent, truant, and tardy more often
- have less efficient work or study habits
- are more disruptive in the classroom
- at the secondary level, visit in-school health clinics more often
- are more likely to drop out of school (3, 8).

Recent research has also found that parents' divorce tends to have longer lasting and more serious effects on the behavior of boys than on girls. Among both boys and girls, the absence of a father by death is less detrimental than absence due to the voluntary separation of the parents (7). For children of divorce, behavior problems such as disobedience, aggression, and excessive demands for attention are most frequent during the first two years after the divorce and then tend to decrease (3).

Although research indicates that, as a group, single-parent children exhibit more behavioral problems, and that many factors negatively affecting achievement and behavior may be more prevalent in one-parent homes, single-parentness is not necessarily the problem (14). For example, in a NAESP study (8), using subsidized school lunch participation as a proxy for family income, data on 14,493 students in grades 7-12 indicated that family income and the sex of the student had a greater effect on achievement rank than did the absence of a parent (usually the father) in the home.

Several studies have found that single-parent children actually function better than children in conflict-ridden families, and one study found children of divorced parents to be more independent in school and at home (2).

Because working women usually head single-parent families, many have assumed that their children suffer the doubly harmful effects of loss of one parent and lack of attention from the other. Although there has been little research on the effects of maternal employment on one-parent families, existing studies do not support popular assumptions. The evidence suggests that if adequate provisions are made for child care and maintenance of household routines, maternal employment may have no adverse effects on children (7). One exception to this finding is that if a mother begins to work at the time of divorce or shortly thereafter, the preschool child may tend to exhibit a higher rate of behavioral disorders (7).

The Minority Single-Parent Family

While there has been a great deal of research on the single-parent child, most studies have dealt with the effects of divorce but have neglected large numbers of families in which the mother never married. Furthermore, little work has been done on how the experience of living in a single-parent (usually fatherless) household differs according to such factors as race and urban versus rural habitation. Such factors may be important. As Hetherington et al. (3) note, the presence of extended families and community networks among blacks may make the single-parent experience significantly different for black children.

With regard to achievement, studies of black children, like interracial studies, show small and nonsignificant effects of one-parent rearing (3). There is some evidence, however, that the social and emotional adjustment of urban black children—both from single-parent and two-parent families—may be hindered by the "latchkey phenomenon," a term used to describe the increasing number of children who, for a certain number of hours each day, are expected to care for themselves without the supervision of an adult. Although this phenomenon occurs in all socioeconomic groups, it may be more prevalant among urban, black elementary school children, where the ratio may be as high as one in three (6).

In their study of latchkey children in grades 1-6 in a black, urban parochial school, Long and Long found that such children often suffer increased fear responses and insecurity, and, because they frequently are not allowed to invite friends to their homes, experience a serious curtailment of socializing play (6).

On the other hand, older studies indicate that the child-rearing practices of working mothers in lower socioeconomic groups and in one-parent (usually female-headed) families may be superior in some ways to the practices of other mothers in enhancing the social and emotional adjustment of their children. Working mothers are more likely to create structured environments for their children and to be more consistent in dealing with them (4). Consistency and structure have been shown to facilitate the adjustment of children who are under stress (3).

In terms of hope and expectations for their children, black single mothers are no different from all other mothers. Black mothers whose marriages have ended or who never married have been found to be no less aspiring for the educational achievement of their children than are mothers in two-parent families (3).

The Single-Parent Family and the School

A recent study of parents and teachers found that teachers had lower expectations of children from single-parent families (5). Likewise, parents perceived that teachers would have lower expectations of such children. The findings suggest that teachers' negative expectations for single-parent children may have an effect on performance, and underscore the need for teachers and administrators to exercise care in dealing with single-parent children and their parents. The literature contains a number of recommendations:

- Teachers and administrators should avoid using pejorative language (e.g., broken families) and expressing prejudicial attitudes toward single-parent families, and should be flexible in scheduling parent-teacher conferences (1, 9).
- Schools should provide curricula that do not perpetuate the "typical family" myth of working father, stay-at-home mother, and two children. (In fact, ony 7% of today's American families fit this mold) (9).
- Administrators should keep close records on single-parent children; requests by noncustodial parents for report cards and school records should be granted (1, 8, 9).
- School personnel should recognize the needs of single-parent families by way of special services for teachers, parents, and children. These services may include provision of in-service seminars for educators that can teach them to recognize symptoms of stress in the classroom; discussion groups for children and/or their parents, led by school counselors or outside professionals; and informational materials and reading lists for single parents from various organizations (9, 10, 12).

Summary

Today, schools are more and more called upon to accomodate students' differences in background and experiences; this picture of diversity also includes the growing number of one-parent families. However, educators need to be cautioned against expecting "trouble" from the child from a one-parent family. The diversity among research findings suggests that while, as a group, single-parent children tend to have more behavioral problems in school and are at greater risk in terms of truancy and dropout rate, the likelihood of any particular child having cognitive or behavioral problems depends upon the interaction of many factors. Among those factors are the adequacy of child care arrangements; the number of siblings; the structure of the child's environment in both the home and the school; the amount of nurturing the child receives; the age, sex, and race of the child; the socioeconomic level of the family; and the circumstances surrounding the separation of the parents. Therefore, the only accurate answer to the question of whether single-parentness is harmful to a child's academic or behavioral development may well be, "It depends."

—Patricia Paiker Roddy

References

(1) Clay, P.L. *Single Parents and the Public Schools. How Does the Partnership Work?* Columbia, MD: National Committee for Citizens in Education, 1981.

(2) Doering, W.G. *Is Life in a One-Parent Family Damaging to Children? A Look at Both Sides.* Richmond, IN, 1980. Mimeographed. ED 193 546.

(3) Hetherington, E. et al. *Cognitive Performance, School Behavior and Achievement of Children from One-Parent Households.* Prepared for the Families as Educators Team of the National Institute of Education. 1981. Mimeographed. ED 221 780.

(4) Hoffman, L.W. "Effect of Maternal Employment on the Child. A Review of the Research." *Developmental Psychology* 10 (1974):204-228.

(5) Levine, E.R. *What Teachers Expect of Children from Single-Parent Families.* Storrs, CT, 1982. Mimeographed. ED 291 692.

(6) Long, T. and Long, L. *Latchkey Children: The Child's View of Self Care.* Washington, D.C., 1982. Mimeographed. ED 211 229.

(7) Moles, O.C. *Trends in Divorce and Effects on Children.* Presented at the meeting of the American Academy for the Advancement of Science, Washington, D.C., January 1982. ED 214 630.

(8) National Association of Elementary School Principals. *First-Year Report of a Longitudinal Study Conducted by the Consortium for the Study of School Needs for Children in One-Parent Families.* Arlington, VA: NAESP, 1980.

(9). Ourth, J. and Zakariya, S.B. "The School and the Single-Parent Student: What Schools Can Do to Help." *Principal* 62, 1 (1982).

(10) Randall, K.L. *The Single-Parent Child in the Classroom.* Southbend, IN, 1981. Mimeographed. ED 204 207.

(11) Shinn, M. "Father Absence and Children's Cognitive Development." *Psychological Bulletin* (American Psychological Association, Washington, D.C.) 85 (1978):295-324.

(12) Sheridan, J.T. *Structured Group Counseling and Bibliotherapy as In-School Strategies for Preventing Problems in Children from Changing Families.* State College, PA, 1981. Mimeographed. ED 205 839.

(13) U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census. "Household and Family Characteristics." *Current Population Reports, Population Characteristics,* Series P20, Number 381. Washington, D.C., 1982.

(14) Zakariya, S.B. "Another Look at the Children of Divorce: Summary Report of the Study of School Needs of One-Parent Children." *Principal* 62, 1 (1982):34-37.

Activity Sheet 1. LEARNER OBJECTIVES AND KEY CONCEPT

KEY CONCEPT:

Every family functions as a home learning environment, regardless of its structure, economic level, or ethnic or cultural background. Consequently, every family has the potential to support and improve the academic achievement of its children.

RATIONALE AND PURPOSE:

Our country has always had a dynamic demographic history, but the changes in families over the last twenty years have been dramatic. These changes include more single parents and working mothers, more children living in poverty, and more immigrant families especially from Latin America and Asia. The schools are attempting to work with such families, but schools must come to know and understand better the diverse family backgrounds of their students before they can reach them effectively.

The purpose of this workshop is to explore how schools can support diverse urban families in developing strong home learning environments, thereby enhancing the potential of their children to succeed in school.

LEARNER OBJECTIVES:

By the end of this workshop, the participants will be able to:

1. Understand the connection between the home learning environment and student achievement.
2. Recognize the strengths inherent in families.
3. Identify the components of strong home learning environments that cut across diverse family structures, economic levels, and ethnic or cultural backgrounds, and that adapt to the changing needs of children as they develop from Kindergarten through 6th grade.
4. Recognize obstacles to building strong home learning environments and the resources schools can provide to help families.

B-66

Activity Sheet 2. KEY TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

FAMILY STRENGTHS. Refers to a cluster of factors found in all families that can be tapped by schools seeking to build effective home-school partnerships. Included among these are: (1) the intimate knowledge parents have of their children's needs and talents; (2) the keen interest parents have in their children's schooling and future; (3) the desire to work with the schools for their children's benefit; (4) parents are the first and most enduring teacher of children; and (5) parents have vast opportunities to teach, model and guide their children. These factors are well-documented in various studies (Chavkin, 1989; Gotts & Purnell, 1987; Harris et al., 1987; Lareau, 1987; Snow, 1982) and in the experience of program developers (Henderson, Marburger, & Ooms, 1986; Lueder, 1989; Rich, 1988);

HOME-SCHOOL PARTNERSHIPS. The mutual collaboration, support, and participation of families and school staff at home or at the school site in activities and efforts that directly and positively affect the success of children's learning and progress in school. The partnership is assumed to be an equal one in which both parents and educators contribute in major ways to the education of young people. The partnership is based upon mutual trust and respect with educators taking the initiative to develop and nurture these key ingredients to effective collaboration.

HOME-LEARNING ENVIRONMENT. The context within which home learning activities and home learning take place. Research has shown a number of characteristics of home learning environments that are successful in promoting children's success in school. For the purposes of these workshops, seven characteristics of successful home learning environments are discussed: (1) Establishing a daily family routine; (2) Monitoring out-of-school activities; (3) Modeling the value of learning and hard work; (4) Expressing high, but realistic, expectations; (5) Encouraging child's overall development and progress in school; (6) Reading, writing, and discussions among family members; and (7) Using community resources for family needs. (See Families Workshop: Activity #3)

HOME LEARNING ACTIVITIES. All the ways that learning is fostered at home with and without encouragement from schools. For present purposes we are most interested in those ways that schools can influence home learning. These activities fall into three broad categories: (1) homework, which is an extension of class learning, and primarily meant for children to complete outside the classroom on their own; (2) home learning suggestions given by the teacher in which the parent or other family members are meant to be active partners. These learning suggestions are given to supplement and expand what is covered in school and give parents a guided opportunity to join in their children's school learning; (3) family initiated home learning activities such as leisure reading, family discussions, trips, religious and cultural activities, and games in which parents can be actively involved with their children.

Activity Sheet 3. BENEFITS OF PARENT INVOLVEMENT

BENEFITS OF PARENT INVOLVEMENT FOR STUDENTS

o Academic Achievement Rises

o Behavior Improves

o Motivation Increases

o Attendance Becomes More Regular

o Dropout Rates Lower

o Attitudes About Homework Become More Positive

o Parent and Community Support Increases

BENEFITS OF PARENT INVOLVEMENT FOR PARENTS

o Receive Ideas from School on How to Help Children

o Learn More About Educational Program and How the School Works

o Become More Supportive of Children

BENEFITS OF PARENT INVOLVEMENT FOR TEACHERS AND SCHOOLS

o Teacher Morale Improves

o Parents Rate Teachers Higher

o Student Achievement Improves

o Parents Support Schools

Activity Sheet 4. STRENGTHS OF FAMILIES

- **As their children's first and most important teachers, parents have vast opportunities to teach, serve as role models, and guide their children as they enter society.** Parents have known their children since birth and have a closer relationship with them than they have with anyone else. Parents are also with their own children in more settings and situations than anyone else. They have greater opportunities to teach directly, set an example for study and learning, observe their children's activities and behavior, and guide their development.

- **Parents have intimate knowledge of their children's needs, skills, and interests; they know their children better than anyone else does.** From their lifelong, close relationship, parents have a unique knowledge of their children. Even though educators may have specialized knowledge of how to identify skills, needs, and interests, teachers see children for only a year or more. The knowledge and insights parents have of their children can be an important resource for teachers in understanding how to motivate a child or handle difficulty.

- **Parents have a keen interest in their children's education and want their children to be successful.** Increasingly parents, especially low-income, minority parents, are reputed to show little interest and support for school. But parents themselves tell a different story. Program developers and evaluators with broad experience have found that all kinds of parents are very interested in their children's education (Moles, in press). For example, in a southwestern regional survey, 95 percent of black and Hispanic parents said they should be sure their elementary school children do their homework and they want to spend time helping them get the best education (Chavkin, 1989). A 1990 national survey concluded that "parents care deeply about their children's education." (Newsweek). Still, many are often unable to commit to spending time with teachers and in the school, and many are intimidated by school settings, having had an unsuccessful school experience themselves.

- **Most parents would like to work with the schools to benefit their children.** Low parent turnout for school meetings and events does not necessarily mean that parents do not care about working with schools. Factors such as discomfort in dealing with professional edcucators, other family and job related responsibilities, and language barriers, play a far larger role than lack of interest. In a Maryland survey, 85 percent of elementary school parents said they spend a quarter hour or more an evening helping their children when teachers request it, and were willing to spend even more time if asked (Epstein, 1982). In the southwest survey, low-income parents were as interested as higher income parents in beling involved in evaluating their child's progress, selecting methods of clasroom discipline, and deciding how much homework is assigned (Chavkin and Williams, 1989).

B-69

Activity Sheet 5. CHARACTERISTICS OF SUCCESSFUL HOME LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS

1. Establishing A Daily Family Routine

Children need regularity and consistency in their lives. Clark (1988) cites individual, in-depth studies of achieving and underachieving twelfth-grade African-American youngsters in Chicago, and culturally diverse fourth-grade youngsters in Los Angeles, which indicate that children who are academically successful tend to come from families who engage in a regular routine of activities.

Examples:

- Providing time, space, quiet, and materials for child's studying, reading, and hobbies
- Assigning chores and household tasks
- Encouraging good health habits - proper balance of rest and activity, regular breakfast and dinner schedules, good nutrition, health care as needed
- Eating meals together
- Being firm about regular bedtime

Developmental considerations: As children grow older, parents should gradually allow them to take increasing responsibility for studying and completing homework, performing household chores, and engaging in good health practices. The goal is to encourage children to be self-reliant while at the same time providing structure and rules.

2. Monitoring Out-of-School Activities

Once children are in school, they still spend 70% of their waking hours (including weekends and vacations) outside the school setting (Clark, 1990). This time represents a tremendous learning opportunity which schools and families need to recognize and develop for the student's advantage. Even when out of their parents' view, children can be guided and monitored, particularly by keeping track of the proportion of time that is spent in constructive activity.

Examples:

- Guiding the use of leisure time, so that it is spent in constructive out-of-school activities
- Setting clear rules and standards about appropriate activities

- Setting limits on television use, in both the amount of time permitted each day and the type of programs to be watched
- Calling on other family members or neighbors to watch or check up on children while parents are not at home.
- Calling home each afternoon at a specfied time to check on child, if parent is at work.

Developmental considerations: As children advance through the school system, they should be allowed more choice in out-of-school activities such as art, music, sports, etc. These activities allow children to pursue their interests and to experience social interactions with peers. Parents need opportunities to get to know their children's friends, as the peer group will become an increasingly important influence on behaviors and attitudes. Monitoring of television viewing should include discussions of programs watched; such discussions could enhance children's critical thinking skils, foster positive parent-child interactions, and increase parents' knowledge regarding the appropriateness of various programs. (See also Activity Sheet 6. Guidelines for Family Television Viewing.)

3. Modeling the Value of Learning and Hard Work

Children learn a tremendous amount by observing and imitating the behavior of others, particularly family members and other adults. Students who value education and understand the connection between success and hard work tend to do better in school (Mayeske, 1973). These values are powerfully influenced by the home environment, but parents need to do more than talk about them. A traditional homily applies here: "However hard we may preach, it is by example that we teach."

Examples:

- Setting an example by reading, writing, and engaging in other learning activities at home
- Using family leisure time productively, such as playing games together where parents demonstrate that planning ahead and problem solving, rather than pure luck, produce success (e.g. Scrabble, Monopoly, Dominoes)
- Establishing a family communication style that values learning by inviting questioning, discussion, and explanation
- Demonstrating that hard work is necessary to achievement, such as by engaging in a family improvement project with visible results

Using reference materials (e.g. dictionary, almanac) at home or in the library to answer questions in more depth or for enjoyment

- Volunteering to help at school on a regular basis

Developmental considerations: As children grow older, they are exposed to other adults, peers, and media figures who may model behavior inconsistent with parental behavior. Older children are not as passive in the process of modeling; they may make a conscious choice to imitate specific individuals other than parents. To guide their children, parents need to model the behavior they hope to instill in their children. Maintaining positive relationships with children also increases the likelihood that children will turn to parents as models. As much as possible, children should be surrounded by other adults and peers who are positive role models.

4. Expressing High but Realistic Expectations for Achievement

Parent expectations for achievement definitely have an influence on the child. Parents who make it clear from an early age that their children should plan on higher education, for example, tend to have children who go on to college. This is not to say that parent expectations should be unrealistically high. Studies have found that realistic or accurate parental expectations (i.e. close to the child's actual performance, rather than too high or low) are associated with high performance on cognitive tasks (Scott-Jones, 1984).

Examples:

- Setting goals and standards for child's conduct that are appropriate for their age and level of maturity
- Urging child to work hard in school
- Encouraging effort for long-term gains vs. short-term benefits
- Recognizing and encouraging a child's special talents
- Communicating parents' high expectations for a student's achievement to teachers and asking for suggestions on how to reinforce that message.
- Letting family members, friends, and neighbors know when a child is successful in school and voicing expectations for continued achievement.

Developmental considerations: As children grow older, they become increasingly aware of others' expectations of them--teachers and peers as well as parents. Older children engage in social comparison; they decide whether they are better or worse than their age-mates on a variety of dimensions, including academic performance. In conveying expectations, it is best to use the child's own past performance, not that of siblings or peers, as a baseline. In general, parents should encourage children to set performance goals that are high, but attainable.

5. Encouraging Child's Overall Development and Progress in School

Children should be treated as winners. Even when children make mistakes, they are not made to feel like losers. Parents (and teachers) who provide frequent verbal support, praising children's skills and efforts, telling them they love and care about them, and using endearing rather than derogatory nicknames, tend to have children with higher self-esteem, who consequently do better in school (Clark,1990).

Examples:

- Cultivating a warm and supporting home atmosphere
- Affirming personal worth through positive labeling and appreciation of the child as a winner
- Rewarding success and applying sanctions appropriately and consistently
- Showing interest in what children are learning in school and the talents they are beginning to display
- Expressing affection and approval
- Discussing regularly the value of a good education, possible career options, and necessary life skills
- Noticing and rewarding achievement in school
- Posting children's work on the wall or refrigerator and sending children's poems, artwork, and stories to other family members and friends
- Asking teacher(s) for home learning activities and homework

Developmental considerations: As children grow older, direct physical expressions of affection and approval between parent and child may not occur as frequently. In addition, older children may sometimes judge themselves harshly and assume that parents also have the same negative opinion of them. Children need a constant level of affection and approval, even though hugs and kisses may not be as frequent as in the past. When the child's behavior and performance are not in keeping with parents' expectations, specific feedback regarding how to change or improve, delivered in a positive manner, is more effective than a punitive or derogatory response.

6. Reading, Writing and Discussions among Family Members

A wealth of studies shows that home learning activities such as reading aloud, and frequent, open family discussions are associated with improved student achievement (Leler, 1983; Singer et al., 1988). In a study of 1900 elementary children in London, Tizard and colleagues (1982) found that when schools encouraged children to practice reading at home with parents, they made highly significant gains in reading achievement at school compared to children who practiced only at school with teachers.

Examples:

- Reading to children at a regular time and listening to children read
- Discussions of school day, family members' lives, and current events
- Storytelling, recounting experiences, and sharing problem-solving strategies
- Writing of all kinds (grocery lists, telephone messages, letters, diary entries)
- Using everyday experiences to teach
- Using household activites to teach skills such as counting, sorting, reading, and following instructions (e.g. following a recipe to bake a cake)
- Watching a favorite TV program together and discussing it afterwards

Developmental considerations: As children grow older, parents will spend less time reading aloud and more time listening to the child read, engaging in conversation, and asking questions that require thoughtful answers. Conversations are two-way, and involve listening to children's opinions as well as expressing the adult point of view. Because the peer group increasingly provides opportunities for children to express themselves, parents may lose a powerful connection with their children unless they provide an "ear" and try to understand children's ideas and beliefs.

7. Using Community Resources

As children increasingly plan and develop their own leisure time, parents need to steer them to other adults who can provide guidance, skills, and mentoring. Although these activities occur outside the home, they are, in effect, an extension of the home in that they are "brokered" by parents and serve as a part of the family's overall strategy to create a productive learning environment for their children.

Parents also need to be in close touch with their children's teachers and other school staff, to obtain information about how they might help reinforce at home what the child is learning, and what programs or services, such as tutoring or clubs, are available. Similarly, parents need to be informed about community services and resources that can offer support for families, such as health clinics, employment and training programs, and other human service agencies. Filling basic needs through such supports may be essential before parents are able to fully help their children.

In his studies of achieving ten and eighteen year-olds, Clark (1990) has found that both groups of youth were connected to activities, programs, and relationships that provide opportunities to mediate potentially harmful life conditions. Children need direct and continuing access to people with whom they can develop healthy, helping relationships. For students to be successfully connected to a variety of such mentors, their parents need to help identify and introduce them.

Examples:

- Exposing children to cultural activities (library and museum visits, movies, and organized participatory sports)
- Enrolling children in youth enrichment programs, such as after-school sports or lessons, community learning programs, museums, or art lessons
- Introducing children to responsible mentors (coaches, counselors, friends, staffs of local organizations)
- Staying in touch with child's teachers and other school staff such as counselors or social workers
- Being aware of and using community services for family needs
    - Employment and training programs
    - Medical and mental health facilities
    - Human service agencies (housing, recreation, income maintenance
- Visiting children's school and asking teachers how to help children do better in school
- Participating in religious services and youth groups

Developmental considerations: As children grow older, they increasingly plan and develop their own leisure time activities. Parents need to steer children to other adults whose guidance, skills, and mentoring will support parents' efforts. Appropriate use of community resources, such as the health care system, employment services, and other human service agencies, will help older children learn to negotiate the social system. Parents can also help older children contribute to the community through activities in community centers, churches, and at school.

B-75

Activity Sheet 6

ERIC Clearinghouse on Elementary and Early Childhood Education
University of Illinois
805 West Pennsylvania Avenue
Urbana, Illinois 61801
(217) 333-1386

ERIC
Digest

EDO-PS-90-3

Guidelines for Family Television Viewing

Children in the U.S. view an average of 3-5 hours of television daily. It is difficult to document effects of such extensive television exposure on children. However, research indicates that television viewing may be linked to violent or aggressive behavior, obesity, poor academic performance, precocious sexuality, and the use of drugs or alcohol. Thus, it is important that parents help their children use television as a positive, creative force, and help them avoid television's negative influences.

Aspects of Viewing

1. *Time spent watching television.* When children spend 3-5 hours a day watching television, time for other activities is severely limited. Childhood is a period of growth and development, when children need to play, alone and with other children. Children need to read and talk with other children and adults.

2. *Violence on television.* The amount of violence on television is increasing. A recent report from the National Institute of Mental Health indicates that television violence can be harmful to young children. Children can become frightened, worried or suspicious from watching violence on TV. Researchers have also found that children who watch many violent programs tend to be more aggressive than other children on the playground and in class. Parents should realize that viewing violent programs may encourage their children's tendency toward aggression. Parents also need to keep in mind that television often portrays sexual behavior and the use of alcohol or drugs in realistic or inviting terms.

3. *TV and learning.* Many recent studies indicate that excessive television viewing may have a detrimental effect on learning and school performance. The hours spent viewing television interfere with homework and limit the time available for other ways of learning. If a child is not performing well academically, television watching may be a strong factor contributing to the problem.

4. *Commercials.* The average child sees more than 20,000 commercials a year. Advertisers spend roughly $700 million annually to make sure that their sales pitches reach large numbers of children. The majority of food advertising is for heavily sugared products such as candy and presweetened cereal. Commercials for meat, milk products, bread, and juice make up only about 4% of the food ads shown during children's viewing time. This emphasis can give children a distorted picture of how they ought to eat. A recent study found a direct relationship between amount of television viewing and children's risk of obesity.

Guidelines for Parents

Here are some ideas that will help parents guide their children's TV viewing:

1. *Set limits.* Know how many hours of television your children watch. Limit your children's viewing to one or two hours per day. Don't be afraid to reduce the amount of television your children watch. Your children probably won't like being kept away from the television set. Television is seductive. The programs your children watch are apt to be filled with commercials promoting other programs. The word-of-mouth campaign that goes on in playgrounds and school cafeterias is powerful and pervasive. But establishing good habits for your children is worth the effort. Television watching is often more habit than choice.

Don't be surprised if your children go through a sort of withdrawal when the television time is reduced. You can ease the transition by encouraging alternative activities such as sports, games, chores, reading, conversation, or hobbies. You can help by joining your children in these activities. Because children model their behavior after their parents' example, an examination of your own television viewing habits may also help. Be a good model yourself.

Eliminate some TV watching by setting a few basic rules, such as no television during meals, or before household tasks or homework are completed.

2. *Plan.* Encourage children to plan their viewing by using a *TV Guide* or newspaper listing rather than flipping the channels to decide what to watch. The set should go on only for specific programs, and it should go off when they are over. Approach a television program as you would a movie. Help children decide which show to see, and talk about the show after it ends. Select programs that feature children in your child's age range. Try to balance action, comedy, fine arts, and sports.

Don't reward or withhold television in order to punish. Such practices make television seem even more important.

3. *Participate.* Know what your children watch on television. Watch with them and talk about the programs. TV programs may help you discuss difficult topics such as sex and war. Follow up interesting programs with library books. Explain situations that are confusing. Ask the child about his or her responses to the program when it is over. Discuss the difference between fantasy and reality. The worst program may be a good experience for your children if you are there to help them get the right message, while the best program may be wasted without your encouragement to think, evaluate, and question.

Parents who watch television with their children will be able to point out that violence on television is not real, and that the actor has not actually been killed or maimed. Parents can also show disapproval of the violent episodes and stress that such behavior is not the best way to resolve a problem. By discussing the violence shown on television, parents can lessen its impact.

The best solution, of course, is for parents to eliminate the most violent programs from their children's schedule. Remember that lock-out devices will ensure that certain channels cannot be seen. If you are offended by certain programs and intend to forbid your children to watch them, try to communicate your reasons. If your children are watching a program, and you see behavior to which you object, tell them so, and explain your objection.

The Center for Early Education and Development's publication *How Can I Guide My Child's TV Viewing?* lists psychologist John Murray's recommendations for actions parents can take to deal with violent programs:

- Watch at least one episode of each program your child watches so you know how violent it is.
- When you are viewing together, discuss the violence with your child. Talk about why the violence happened and how painful it was. Ask your child for ideas about how the conflict could have been resolved without violence.
- Explain to your child how violence on entertainment programs is faked and what might happen if other people casually tried these same stunts.
- Encourage your child to watch programs with characters who cooperate and care for each other. Such programs have been shown to influence children in positive ways.

4. *Resist commercials.* Don't expect your children to resist commercials for candy and snack foods without help from you. The ability to see through a sales pitch is learned fairly late and with difficulty. Poor eating habits can be picked up early and with ease. Advertisers have market researchers, writers, producers, and saturation campaigns with big budgets on their side. When your children request foods and toys advertised on television, teach them that television makes them want things they don't necessarily need and that may even be harmful. Help the child analyze commercials. Note the exaggerated claims, and the fact that the makers of the product pay for advertising.

5. *Express your views.* The most effective way to change commercials or programs is to call your local television station. When you are offended or pleased by something on television, let the station manager know. Write or call the network or the program's sponsor. Stations, networks, and sponsors are all concerned about the effects of television on children and are responsive to parents' concerns. Be specific. Don't call or write just to complain. It is also important to voice your approval. Programs you like may not have high ratings, and your support may help keep them on the air.

If you feel a commercial is inaccurate or misleading, write down the name of the product, the channel, the time you saw the commercial, and a brief description of your concern. Then call your local Better Business Bureau with this information, or send it to the Children's Advertising Review Unit, Council of Better Business Bureaus, Inc., 845 Third Avenue, New York, NY 10022.

6. *Get help.* Action for Children's Television (ACT, 20 University Road, Cambridge, MA 02138) has been a leading public interest group.

This ERIC Digest was adapted from two publications:

How Can I Guide My Child's TV Viewing? from the Center for Early Education and Development of the University of Minnesota, and

Television and the Family, Copyright c 1986, American Academy of Pediatrics. Reprinted with permission.

For More Information

Cecil, Nancy Lee. "Help Children Become More Critical TV Watchers." *PTA Today* 13 (April, 1988): 12-14.

Corporation for Public Broadcasting, Washington, DC. "TV Tips for Parents: Using Television to Help Your Child Learn." (1988). (ERIC Document Number: ED 299 948).

Lickona, Thomas. "TV: Taming the One-Eyed Dragon." *PTA Today* 12 (December-January, 1987): 16-18.

ERIC Digests are in the public domain and may be freely reproduced and disseminated.

This publication was funded by the Office of Educational Research and Improvement, U.S. Department of Education. Opinions expressed in this report do not necessarily reflect the positions or policies of OERI.

Activity Sheet 6 - continued

B-77

Activity Sheet 7

A PROFILE OF AMERICAN FAMILIES

Percent of Poor Children in 1989 Who Were:

White, non-Latino	41
African American	35
Latino	21
Asian or Pacific Islander	3
Rural	26
Suburban	29
Central City	46
In Married-couple families	38
In female headed families	54
In male-headed families	4

****

Mothers in the Labor Force

	1970	1990
All Mothers over 16	43%	67%
Married/no children under 18 yrs	42%	51%
Married/children under 18 yrs	40%	67%
Married/children under 6 yrs	30%	60%

****

Median Income of Families

	1969	1990
African American/Woman Headed	$9,466	$11,630
White/Woman Headed	$15,583	$18,946
African American/Married Couple	$20,767	$30,650
White/Married Couple	$29,019	$39,208

Sources: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. March '90 Supplement to Current Population Survey for Mothers in the Labor Force and Median Incomes figures; Children's Defense Fund, Child Poverty in America, 1991 for Percent of Poor Children in 1989.

Activity Sheet 8

Checksheet on Low Income Families

Challenges Faced	**How Can Schools Help**
Lack of money for necessities	____________________
Lack of time for working parents	____________________
Transportation problems	____________________
Family health problems	____________________
Few community services and enrichment resources	____________________
Violence, drugs, negative role models	____________________
Scarcity of safe affordable housing	____________________

Activity Sheet 9

Checksheet on Single Parent Families and Families with Mothers Working

Challenges Faced by Working Mothers	**How Can Schools Help**
Scarcity of quality childcare	____________________
Before & After School Supervision	____________________
Lack of time	____________________
Lack of energy	____________________
Difficulty maintaining family routine	____________________
Challenges Faced by Single Mothers	
Lower income	____________________
Fewer extended family members	____________________

Activity Sheet 10

Checksheet on Immigrant Families

Challenges Faced	**How Can Schools Help**
Family culture is different from outside environment	
Dissonance between values of U.S. culture and traditional values of homeland	
Difficulty communicating with school	
Language spoken is not English	

B-81

Activity Sheet 11

TEACHER STRATEGIES TO HELP PARENTS DEVELOP SUCCESSFUL HOME LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS

Directions:
Read the items under each characteristic. Then, list additional suggestions for ways teachers could help parents strengthen each characteristic.

1. Establishing a Daily Family Routine
* Regular homework policy - same amount of time each night
* Be consistent in assigning homework - have a routine.
* Regular advance notice home of class/school activities
* Friday Folder - send schoolwork home same day every week

*____

*____

*____

2. Monitoring Out-Of-School Activities
* Enrichment activities before and after school - inform parents
* Guidelines for constructive use of television - send home flyers or newsletters

*____

*____

*____

3. Modeling the Value of Learning and Hard Work
* Suggest or send home educational activities for whole family
* Set up a school reference library families can use

*____

*____

*____

4. Expressing High but Realistic Expectations for Achievement
* Reward improved achievement
* Recognition events for all children, not just those who are bright or well behaved.
* College/career information

*____

*____

Activity Sheet 11 - continued

5. Encouraging Child's Overall Development and Progress in School

* Information on curriculum
* Opportunities to get to know principal, teachers
* Have a workshop on "Building Your Child's Self-Esteem".
* "Happygrams" or positive post cards for achievement
* Provide weekly information reports on student work which parents sign and return with the child.

*______________________________

*______________________________

*______________________________

6. Reading, Writing and Discussions among Family Members

* Give a demonstration on how to read with your child.
* Send home examples of games that encourage children to listen carefully.
* Give parents packets of materials to take home and start home libraries.
* Have students interview their parents and/or gradparents about how life has changed since their childhood. Compile interviews into a "Family Memory Book."
* Lend families books their kids like

*______________________________

*______________________________

*______________________________

7. Using Community Resources

* Hand out directory of community services and places to visit
* Be alert to family needs in conversations and suggest contacting specific local agencies
* Give parents suggestions for summer activities such as packets of learning materials.
* Suggest nearby individuals and organizations that can provide guidance and skills training to realize the potential of children

*______________________________

*______________________________

*______________________________

READINGS/RESOURCES (by Workshop Activity)

Benefits of Parent Involvement in Home Learning:

Epstein, J.L. (1987). Parent Involvement: What Research says to Administrators. Education and Urban Society (19): 119-136.

Henderson, A. (1987). The Evidence Continues to Grow: Parent Involvement Improves Student Achievement . Columbia MD: National Committee for Citizens in Education.

Scott-Jones, D. (1988). Families as Educators: The Transition from Informal to Formal School Learning. Educational Horizons (66): 66-69.

Successful Home Learning Environments:

Clark, R. (1990). Why Disadvantaged Students Succeed. Public Welfare (Spring): 17-23.

Dornbusch, S. M. and Wood, K.D. (1989) Family Processes and Educational Achievement. Education and the American Family. 66-93.

Rich, D. & Jones, C. (1978). The Three R's Plus: Teaming Families and Schools for Student Achievement. The Home & School Institute, Inc. Reproductions Inc. Rockville, MD.

Walberg, H. (1984) educational productivity article in Educational Leadership (OLLIE)

Characteristics of American Families:

Bane, M.J., & Ellwood, D.T. (1989). One Fifth of the Nation's Children: Why Are They Poor? Science (245): 1047-1053.

Children's Defense Fund (1991). Child Poverty in America. Washington, DC: Author.

Milne, A.M. (1989). Family Structure and the Achievement of Children. Education and the American Family. Check Sheet on Low Income Families

Challenges Faced

Weston, W.J. (ed.) (1989). **Education and the American Family.** New York: New York University Press.

African American

Clark, R. (1990). Why Disadvantaged Students Succeed. Public Welfare (Spring): 17-23.

Hispanic

Santellanes, D. (1989). Leadership in the Hispanic Community: The Importance of Context. *Community Education Journal (Volume XVI, Number 4, Summer).*

Nicolau, Siobhan. (1991). Schools Helping Urban Parents Strengthen Home Learning. New York: Hispanic Policy Development Project,

Native American

Colburn, J. & Adcock, B. (1989). Community Education and the Native American Community: Interviews with Jackye Colburn and Billie Adcock. *Community Education Journal, XVI, (4), Summer.*

Asian American and Pacific Islanders

Divoky, D. (1988). The Model Minority Goes to School. *Phi Delta Kappan (November).*

Ing, V.; Stueber, R.; & Yamamoto, K. (1989). Hawaii's Parent-Community Networking Centers: Going Back to Community. *Community Education Journal, XVI,(4) Summer:* 17-20

Morrow, R. (1989). Involving Southeast Asian Parents in Schools. *Thrust (February /March).*

Yao, E.L. (1988). Working Effectively with Asian Immigrant Parents. *Phi Delta Kappan, 70 (3):* 223-225.

OTHER SUGGESTED READINGS:

Krysan, M.; Moore, K.A.; & Zill, N. (1990). Research on Successful Families. Report on a conference sponsored by the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation, gton, DC.

Santrock, J.W. & Tracy, R.L. (1978). The Effects of Children's Family Structure Status on the Development of Stereotypes by Teachers. *Journal of Educational Psychology (70):* 754-757.

Scott-Jones, D. (1984). Family Influences on Cognitive Development and School Achievement. *Review of Education Research (11):* 259-304.

Stevenson, H.W.; Chen, C.; & Uttal, D.H. (1990). Beliefs and Achievement: A Study of Black, White, and Hispanic Children. *Child Development (61):* 508-523.

REFERENCES

Amundson, Kristen J. First Teachers: Parental Involvement in the Public Schools. Alexandria, Virginia: National School Boards Association, 1988. 57 pages. ED 302 883.

Ascher, Carol (1988). Improving the school-home connection for low-income urban parents. ERIC Digest, No. 41. New York: ERIC Clearinghouse on Urban Education. (March).

Chavkin, N.F. (1989). Debunking the Myth about Minority Parents. Educational Horizons, (Summer): 119-123.

Chavkin, N.F. & Williams, D.L. Jr. (1988). Critical Issues in Teacher Training for Parent Involvement. Educational Horizons (66): 87-88.

Children's Defense Fund (1991). Child Poverty in America. Washington, DC: Author.

Clark, R. M. (1990). Why Disadvantaged Students Succeed. Public Welfare (Spring): 17-23.

Clark, R.M. (1988). Parents as Providers of Linguistic and Social Capital. Educational Horizons, 66 (2): 93-95.

Davies, Don. "Low-Income Parents and the Schools: A Research Report and a Plan for Action." Equity and Choice 4, 3 (Spring1988): 51-57. EJ 374 512.

Epstein, Joyce. "Parents' Reactions to Teacher Practices of Parent Involvement." Elementary School Journal 86, 3 (January 1986): 277-94. EJ 337 873.

Gotts, E. E. and Purnell, R. F. (1987). Practicing school-family relations in urban settings. Education and Urban Society, 19 (2), 212-218.

Harris, L., Kagay, M. and Ross, J. (1987). The Metropolitan Life survey of the American teacher: strengthening links between home and school. New York: Louis Harris and Associates.

Henderson, A. (1987). The Evidence Continues to Grow: Parent Involvement Improves Student Achievement . Columbia MD: National Committee for Citizens in Education.

Henderson, A., Marburger, C.L. and Ooms, T. (1986). Beyond the bake sale: An educator's guide to working with parents. Columbia, MD: National Committee for Citizens in Education.

Hester, Harold. "Start at Home to Improve Home-School Relations." NASSP Bulletin 73, 513 (January 1989): 23-37. EJ 382 018.

Hodgkinson, H. (1989). The Right Schools for the Right Kids. Community Education Journal. XVI (4) Summer: 6-9.

Lareau, A. (1987). Social class differences in family-school relatinships: The importance of cultural capital. Sociology of Education, 60 (April) 73-85.

Leler, H. (1983). Parent Education and Involvement in Relation to the schools and to Parents of School-Aged Children. In R. Haskins and D. Adams (eds.), Parent Education and Public Policy, Norwood, NJ: Ablex.

Liontos, Lynn Balster. (1991)Involving the Families of At-Risk Youth in the Educational Process. Trends and Issues. Eugene, Oregon: ERIC Clearinghouse on Educational Management. (January).

Lueder, D. C. (1989). Tennessee parents were invited to participate--and they did. Educational Leadership, 47 (2) 15-17.

Krasnow, Jean. Building Parent-Teacher Partnerships: Prospects From the Perspective of the Schools Reaching Out Project. Boston: Institute for Responsive Education, 1990. 66 pages. ED 318 817.

Mayeske, G.W. (1973). A Study of the Achievement of Our Nation's Students. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 102-666).

Metropolitan Life Survey. (1987). The American Teacher 1987. New York: Louis Harris and Associates, Inc.

Milne, A.M. (1989). Family Structure and the Achievement of Children. Education and the American Family. Wm. J. Weston (ed.) New York: New York University Press.

Moles, O.C. (1992). School Performance of Children from One-Parent Families. Changing Lives, edited by Martin Bloom, Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press.

Newsweek (1990). The PTA/Dodge National Parent Survey: A Study of Parental Involvement in Education. Newsweek Magazine.

Nicolau, Siobhan. (1991). Schools Helping Poor Hispanic Parents Strengthen Home Learning. New York: Hispanic Policy Development Project.

Olmsted, Patricia (1989). Hard-to-reach parents: what administrators and teachers should know about working with special populations. Paper presented at Chapter 1 Parent Involvement Center Workshop. May 16-18.

Portes, P.R. (1983). The Effects of Family Communication Style on Student Achievement as a Function of Early Age Intervention, Social Class, and Race. Unpublished manuscript, University of Louisville.

Rich, D. (1988). Bridging the parent gap in education reform. Educational Horizons, 66 (2), 90-92.

Roddy, Patricia Palker. (1984). A closer look at children in single-parent families. ERIC/CUE Digest Number 23. New York: ERIC Clearinghouse on Urban Education. (June).

Scott-Jones, D. (1988). Families as Educators: The Transition from Informal to Formal School Learning. Educational Horizons (66): 66-69.

Scott-Jones, D. (1986). The Family. In J. Hannaway & M.E. Lockheed (Eds.). The Contributions of the Social Sciences to Educational Policy and Practice: 1965-1985. Berkeley, Ca: McCutchan Publishers.

Scott-Jones, D. (1984). Family Influences on Cognitive Development and School Achievement. Review of Education Research (11): 259-304.

Simich-Dudgeon. (1986). Parent involvement and the education of limited-English-proficient students. ERIC Digest. Washington, D.C.: ERIC Clearninghouse on Languages and Linguistics.

Singer, J.L.; Singer, D.G.; Desmond, R.; Hirsch, B.; & Nichol, A. (1988). Family Mediation and Children's Cognition, aggression, and comprehension of television: A Longitudinal Study. Journal of Applied Developmental Psychology (9):347.

Snow, M. B. (1982). Characteristics of families with special needs in relation to schools. Charleston, WV: Appalachia Educational Laboratory.

Tangri, S.S. & Moles, O. (1987). Parents and the Community. In V. Richardson-Koehler (ed.) Educator's Handbook. New York: Longman.

Tizard, J.; Schofield, W.N.; & Hewison, J. (1982). Collaboration Between Teachers an Parents in Assisting Children's Reading. British Journal of Educational Psychology (52, Part 1): 1-11.

U.S. Department of Education. (1986). Curriculum of the home. What Works: Research About Teaching and Learning. Washington, D. C.

Walberg, H. J. (1984). Families as Partners in Educational Productivity. Phi Delta Kappan (February), 397-400.

Yao, E.L. (1988). Working Effectively with Asian Immigrant Parents. Phi Delta Kappan, 70 (3): 223-225.

B-57

Hard-to-reach Parents: What Administrators and Teachers Should know about Working with Special Populations

Patricia P. Olmsted
High/Scope Educational Research Foundation
Ypsilanti, MI

Chapter 1 Parent Involvement Center Workshop
May 16 - 18, 1989

I. WHO ARE "HARD-TO-REACH" PARENTS?

low-income, middle-income or upper-income families single parent or two parent families
families in which one, both, or neither adults are illiterate
adult-aged or adolescent-age parent families
dysfunctional or functional families
families who are ethnically/racially/culturally different or the same as teacher and/or school administrators
residential or migrant families

II. HOW SHOULD "HARD-TO-REACH" PARENT BE IDENTIFIED?

It is not helpful to define "hard-to-reach" parents by categorical "labels". In the field of education, we have "labeled" children for years and the results have been more negative than positive. I would like to think we will not make a similar error and label groups of "hard-to-reach" families.

Do not make assumptions about families because of "characteristics" that they may have (e.g., single parent or low-income). Because a family has certain characteristics does not mean that specific attitudes or behaviors (e.g., feelings of alienation about schools) can automatically be attributed to them. Each family is a unique grouping of people with a unique history, a unique set of support relationships, and a unique set of resources. Only specific information about a family will assist you in your decisions about strategies to use when approaching the family.

The following examples illustrate the misconceptions that can develop from using "labels". For each example, you will note that although the two families share certain characteristics (labels), the circumstances of their lives in other ways are very different. Only by looking at the whole picture for a family can one see possible reasons why the family might be participate in parent involvement activities.

B-88

Example #1: Low-income, single-parent family. (M and 2 children age 2 and 6)

Family A: M divorced, F contributes some child-support (he is employed as unskilled laborer, so amount is not large.) F is actively involved with children. M lives near her parents and adult siblings, many gatherings and interactions.

Family B: M widowed. M lives in public housing with her children. Housing area unsafe due to youth gangs, drugs, etc. No immediate family within same community.

Example #2: Two-parent, middle-income family. (F, M, and 2 children ages 2 and 6

Family A: F employed as manager in company, M runs unlicensed family day care home in their house. Younger child had chronic health problem (e.g., asthma). Both sets of grandparents live same community, but visits between families are rare.

Family B: F unemployed due to injury on job, receiving disability payments. M working two jobs, as an aide in nursing home five days per week and as a clerk in a department store two evening a week and on Saturdays.

Considering the misconceptions that can occur when labels are used to identify "hard-to-reach" families, I would suggest that an objective criterion be used for the identification. Then, a definition for "hard-to-reach" families might read as follow:

> "Hard-to-reach" families are those who have not initiated contact with the school and who have not responded to three invitations from the school to work together with them on the child's education.

Once a family has objectively been identified as "hard-to-reach", try to gather basic information about the family that may help you understand why they have not responded to the school's invitations. That is, informtion about family structure, employment status, support network, etc.--information that may assist you in developing strategies for apporaching the family.

III. HOW ARE "HARD-TO-REACH" FAMILIES DIFFERENT FROM OTHER FAMILIES?

What goals (or dreams) do "hard-to-reach" parents have for their children? Are these goals different from goals of "non-hard-to-reach" families.

Regardless of socioeconomic status or ethnic/racial group, it has been found that families tend to have the same goals (or dreams) for their children. And, across all groups, parents still see education as the major road by which their children can reach these goals. Thus, in this regard, "hard-to-reach" families and "non-hard-to-reach" families are similar.

If the two groups of families (hard-to-reach and non-hard-to-reach) have similar goals (or dreams) for their children, are there identifiable attitudes and/or beliefs that distinguish the two sets of families.

From my experience, I have identified three major groups of "hard-to-reach" parents. Not all "hard-to-reach" parents will be subsumed into these three categories. Some families will show characteristics of two groups. Other families will not seem to fit into any group, but will seem to be in a group of their own.

IV. THREE GROUPS OF "HARD-TO-REACH" PARENTS.

A. Parents who have low self-esteem.

These parents often feel they have nothing to contribute to their child's education. They sometimes say that they don't understand why you (the school) would ask them to be involved in the program. They don't see that they teach their child things every day, because they don't think they know how to teach their child.

B. Parents who do not realize the important of their role in their child's education

In recent years, it has been found that many parents see the school as the primary (only) agent in assisting their children to work toward their life goals, and see little or no role for themselves in this regard. Sometimes, these parents will make statements such as "The teachers are trained to work with my child, so they should do it," or "Teaching my child is the job of the schools." There is little understanding among these parents of the key role they play as models and as guiding figures in the education of their children. For these parents, it is not a matter of thinking that they have nothing to contribute, but that they do not think it is their role (or responsibility) to do so. They may have a goal of wanting their child to graduate from high school, but do not see how they should work actively with the child and the school to maximize the chances that this goal will be attained.

C. Parents who are overwhelmed by trying to meet the basic needs of the family.

In some cases, even though parents may realize the important of their role in the child's education, they are unable to participate in a major way due to being overwhelmed by "basic survival needs". Sometimes, single parents with limited support networks may find themselves in this situation. In this case, the situation is not so much one of understanding the importance of their involvement in their child's eduation as it is one of lack of time and resources.

V. SPECIFIC BARRIERS FREQUENTLY MENTIONED BY "HARD-TO-REACH" PARENTS.

"Hard-to-reach" parents sometimes identify specific barriers that they say restrict (or prohibit) their participation in parent involvement programs. For some parents, these barriers may be the actual reasons for non-involvement (e.g., lack of transportation). However, other parents may identify one of these barriers when in fact there is an underlying barrier that is not identified (e.g., lack of transportation given as barrier when low self-esteem is an underlying barrier).

I have listed some of the frequently mentioned specific barriers below and for each barrier, suggestions for overcoming it are included.

Barrier	**Suggestions to overcome barrier**
Lack of transportation, child care, etc.	Provide transportation (e.g., other parent). Provide child care during meetings.
Lack of "teaching skills"	Provide daily routine (home) activities. Provide training sessions.
Overwhelmed by basic needs of family - with limited resources available	Provide information about services. Make referral to agency (if appropriate).
Language difficulties (e.g., non-English speaking, illiterate)	Translate written materials. Have person who speaks same language make telephone call or home visit.
Employment schedule(s) make involvement difficult	Schedule breakfast conference or meetings. Set up meeting at place of employment during lunch or break (if possible).
Feelings of alienation toward schools, teachers, and administrators	Ask "involved" parent to initiate contact. Involve community worker or church leader as intermediary.

PARTICIPANT EVALUATION FORM

Building Home-School Partnerships for Learning

This has been a pilot workshop. Please help us revise it for wider use by answering the following questions.

Name of Workshop: ______________________________ Date: ____

School District: ______________________________ State: ____

Name of Your School or Organization: ________________________

1. What was the most helpful aspect of this workshop? Why?

2. What was the least helpful aspect of this workshop? Why?

3. If this workshop is presented again, what would you change and why?

I am (check one)

___ a K-3 grade teacher
___ a 4-6 grade teacher
___ a principal
___ another school site professional (specify) _______________
___ a school district staff member
___ a school district official
___ a parent
___ other (specify) ___________________

Thank you for taking part in this workshop and giving us your thoughts on it. We hope you will find it useful in building stronger partnerships with the parents of your students.

C-1

Building Home-School Partnerships for Learning:
Workshops for Urban Educators (Pilot Version)

School Programs and Practices

Workshop Leader's Guide

Developed for
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
U.S. Department of Education
by Janet Chrispeels

C-2

Overview

KEY CONCEPT

Schoolwide guidelines, programs, and practices are essential and necessary to the development of effective home-school partnerships that foster family involvement both at school and in school-related learning activities with children at home.

RATIONALE AND PURPOSE

Research on effective schools shows the importance of schoolwide goals, programs, and practices in bringing about changes in the school's organization, curriculum and instructional practices, and culture in ways that increase student achievement. The same schoolwide focus is also essential in building an effective home-school partnership and in implementing successful home learning activities and programs. When schoolwide practices, which have been cooperatively developed by parents, teachers, and other school staff are initiated, everyone at the school benefits (Epstein and Becker, 1982, Epstein, 1987, Henderson, 1981, 1987; Tangri and Moles, 1987).

The research conducted at The Johns Hopkins University by Epstein and Becker (1982) showed that individual teachers can positively impact student learning and behavior when they communicate regularly with parents, invite them to assist with children's learning at home, and involve them as volunteers in classroom activities at school. However, these good practices tend to benefit only the children in that teacher's classroom. To ensure the benefit for all children, schoolwide guidelines and practices need to be established. Teachers who are not comfortable working with parents need skills and support. It is well documented that most administrators and teachers have had few opportunities to develop skills in working with parents during either pre-service or inservice training (Chavkin and Williams, 1985).

The purpose of this workshop is to assist administrators, teachers, other school staff, and parent leaders to work effectively with families in identifying and developing schoolwide guidelines, programs, and practices which build effective home-school partnerships and which promote and support the participation of families in student learning activities at home.

LEARNER OBJECTIVES

By the end of this workshop, participants will be able to:

1. Understand the importance and necessity of schoolwide programs and practices in the development of strong home-school partnerships.
2. Identify schoolwide factors that promote or hinder home-school partnerships, especially parent involvement in student learning at home.
3. Understand the relationship between effective schools characteristics and family practices which support student learning both at home and at school.
4. Be able to identify five types of home-school partnership roles and understand how they relate to the effective schools framework.
5. Understand how to apply the five home-school partnership roles and effective schools framework to two case studies

6. Know several *next steps* to take to strengthen each participant's home-school partnership program.

ESTIMATED TIME: **Two hours for shorter version, 3 or more hours for longer version**

This workshop is designed to be presented in several different time frames to meet a variety of staff development needs. The amount of time devoted to this workshop depends on whether the goal is to provide information and awareness of the topic, or to use the workshop as a springboard for changing school practices by taking time to discuss the topic more fully and to develop a school action plan.

Option 1: If a school has only a one-hour time frame for after-school staff development, the workshop can be divided approximately into one-hour blocks. ***Activities #1, #2 and #3*** can be completed within an hour, with some time for discussion of a school's current programs and barriers which may be inhibiting the development of home-school partnerships. ***Activity #4 and #5*** could then be done in a second workshop, and ***Activity #6 and some of #7***, developing a plan of action: a third workshop. Alternatively, an entire separate one hour session could be devoted to developing a plan of action, ***Activity #7***.

Option 2: If only one two-hour staff development session is available, it is recommended that the warm-up activity be dropped. Also, participants could just spend a few minutes reading ***Activity Sheet #2,*** Characteristics of Successful Home Learning Environments, without engaging in much discussion. The workshop leader will need to follow the suggested time allocations closely, and there will be very limited time for discussion, and no time for developing a plan of action, if the two hour version is conducted..

Option 3: If three and a half to four hours are available for this workshop, there will be time to complete all activities and more time for discussion, analysis of the cases studies, and development of an action plan.

Option 4: If this is a topic a school wishes to cover in more depth to actually bring about school change, the workshop activities lend themselves to that purpose. For example, after being presented the effective schools framework and the home-school partnership roles, and after reading the case studies, the staff or a special committee could use the case study models for analyzing their own school practices and for developing a case study of their school These more extended activities, would give the school a better basis for developing its own home-school partnership plan.

ACTIVITIES		**TIME ESTIMATE**	
		Shorter	**Longer**
#1	Introduction and Warm-up	**10 min**	**15 min**
#2	Identify the need for school level actions to build strong partnerships with families	**15 min**	**20 min**
#3	Identify schoolwide factors that promote or hinder the development of home-school partnerships and family participation	**20 min**	**30 min**
#4	Link characteristics of effective schools with characteristics of successful home learning environments	**20 min**	**30 min**
#5	Understand Five Types of Home-School Partnership Roles	**10 min**	**20 min**

#6	Use the partnership roles and effective schools framework to analyze two case studies	25 min	40 min
#7	Planning the "next steps"	15 min	30 min
#8	Summary and Closing	5 min	10 min
		-------	------
Total		120 min	195 min.

TRANSPARENCIES: Please see transparency section for list.

PARTICIPANT WORBOOK CONTENTS: Please see participant workbook section

WORKSHOP LOGISTICS

As the workshop leader, you will need to:

1. Duplicate sufficient copies of the participant workbook and task cards as indicated in Activity # 3, make needed transparencies, and take care of other workshop logistics, such as securing a flip chart and stand, masking tape, overhead projector, screen, name tags, pens and pencils, marking pens, blank transparencies, and a timer for timing activities;
2. Make symbol posters (fire, wind, water, earth or four instruments) or assemble art supplies for alternative warm-up activity.
3. Identify a workshop host who can make the room arrangements, prepare name tags, and organize refreshments and child care, if necessary;
4. Arrange seating so that participants can work in groups, preferable seated around tables;
5. Post workshop agenda with the activities you plan to cover.
5. Make a welcoming sign with the following information:

Welcome to School Programs and Practices that Foster Home-School Partnerships

1. Please make a name tag.
2. While you wait:
    a. Have some refreshments;
    b. Look at the materials in your workbook;
    c. Meet someone new.

AUDIENCE

This workshop is designed for administrators, teachers, and other school staff. If teams from schools attend, key parent leaders, who will be involved in future planning activities, should be involved as part of the team. These key parent leaders may be members of a school advisory council, the school's restructuring committee or from the PTA board or other parent group. It is important that both teachers and parents, who are selected to attend the workshop, be representative of the school / community and be in a position to influence other teachers and parents. If parents are not included in initial training, they subsequently need to be active participants in planning parent involvement and home-school partnership activities.

This workshop may also be valuable for teacher educators, especially those responsible for training future administrators.

PREPARATION FOR THE WORKSHOP

Prior to leading this workshop, the workshop leader needs to:

- become familiar with the topic by reading the materials for the entire workshop, including some of the articles in the Reference List;
- adapt the workshop outline to his or her personal style and informational background;
- talk with principals and teachers who have implemented comprehensive home-school partnership programs to get examples and ideas for inclusion in the workshop;
- identify unique community characteristics and demographics that will influence the type of programs developed and require special considerations, e.g., large numbers of non-English speaking students and families who will require interpreters and translations if programs are to be successfully implemented.

This workshop focuses on school level actions that foster home-school partnerships and that will lay the ground work for parents to be involved with their children in learning activities at home. As the case studies so ably demonstrate, a comprehensive approach to parent involvement and partnership building is likely to have the greatest impact on student learning (Gordon, 1978). The workshop leader will want to stress throughout the workshop the need for each school to develop a positive, warm, and welcoming environment for parents and effective communication strategies as the foundation for involving families effectively in home-learning activities. In other words, parents will best be able to assist their children's learning at home when:

- parents are made to feel welcome and comfortable at school
- there is an extensive and regular means of two-way communication between home and school, especially about homework, expectations, the curriculum, student progress, and how parents can help;
- there are workshops for parents to learn how to help;
- there is a place where parents can meet and call their own;
- parents are given many opportunities at school to show their support for their children;
- when teachers are provided with opportunities to learn about students' families, how to communicate with them, and how to involve them in meaningful activities;
- parents have a meaningful role in shaping the parent involvement program and assisting in other school decisions.

While this workshop stands on its own, it is also part of a series. In several places throughout this workshop there are references to the other workshops in the series. It will be important for the leader of this workshop to be familiar with the others. *The Families as Learning Environments* workshop helps to set the tone for the whole series by exploring the cultural diversity of the many families schools serve and their strengths as learning environments for their children. The *School Programs* workshop provides a schoolwide perspective and overview, which is followed by two workshops that address more specific school and teacher practices,*Communication Strategies*, and *Homework and Home Learning Activities*. The workshop entitled, *School District Policies and Supports*, discusses the critical role of district leadership in creating the necessary policies, support, and context for school level initiatives in parent involvement.

A word of caution: Building a strong home-school partnership program that maximizes the potential for parents to support their children's learning both at home and at school requires a long-term concerted commitment by the school staff as well as an ongoing effort as new children and parents each year enter the school system. This workshop, even when combined with the others in the series, will raise awareness and suggest some possibilities for action. To bring about significant change will require administrators, teachers, support staff, and parents to engage in ongoing active study, planning, implementation and evaluation at the school site.

Debates and Dilemmas

The most challenging task facing schools is learning new roles and responsibilities—a job that is never easy. There will be many concerns or issues that are likely to surface as schools implement schoolwide guidelines, programs, and practices to encourage home-school partnership programs. This workshop does not offer answers to all of the many issues and concerns that participants will have, nor is the workshop leader expected to have all the answers. Participants should be encouraged to look for solutions in their own context. The activities and information, especially the case studies, presented in this workshop are designed to help participants move toward solutions, but there are no easy answers. The following provides an outline of the key issues addressed by each activity:

1. **Why is it important to have schoolwide programs and practices? (*Activity #2*)**

    - Schools develop cultures that define their relations with the school community.
    - The school culture can be open and accepting or closed and defensive toward parents.
    - It takes schoolwide action to change the school culture.
    - While individual teachers can reach out to parents, teacher outreach supported by schoolwide approaches will be more effective.
    - The hallmark of an effective school is one that has higher achievement among all subgroups as a result of coordinated and tightly-coupled actions in all aspects of school life, including home-school relations.

2. **What school factors promote or hinder the development of home-school partnerships? (*Activity #3*)**

    - Hindering factors can include: an environment or atmosphere in which parents feel unwelcome, especially in the school office where parents are first greeted; lack of school personnel who speak the language of the parents; inconsistencies in practices among teachers that confuse parents; lack of clearly defined learning objectives or failure to communicate learning objectives to parents; communication with parents only when there is a problem; failure to involve parents in planning and implementing programs designed to serve parents.
    - Promoting factors can include: welcoming signs and personnel who can communicate in the language of the parents; consistent programs and practices, especially in regard to homework, learning objectives, conferencing, and communications; multiple opportunities for teachers and parents to meet and work together.

3. **How can the effective schools framework provide a guideline for implementing home-school partnership programs? (*Activity #4*)**

    - The characteristics of an effective school are similar to family practices that support children's learning.

- Because of the similarity, schools can use the effective schools characteristics to not only improve school practices but also to reinforce successful family practices in the home.

4. What roles and types of activities are embedded in a comprehensive home-school partnership program? (*Activity #5*)

- A comprehensive model includes at least five major partnership roles: home and school as co-communicators, co-supporters, co-learners, co-teachers, and co-decision-makers, advocates, and advisors.
- These roles build one on another and are over-lapping.
- All partnership roles are needed, but the ones that most help parents to support learning at home are the roles of co-communicators, co-learners, and co-teachers.

5. What are some examples of schoolwide practices that build strong home-school partnerships and that foster learning by students at home? (*Activity #6*)

- Activities undertaken by schools need to reinforce effective school / effective family practices.
- Home-school partnership programs need to be comprehensive in scope and be designed to addressed the five key home-school partnership roles: communications, support for child, family and school, opportunities for both parents and teachers to learn about each other, opportunities for parents to play an active teaching role and opportunities for teachers and parents to be advisors, advocates and decision-makers.
- Willard Model School and St John the Baptist School provide good case study models for examining effective home-school partnership practices.

6. What steps does a school need to take to build a home-school partnership program? (*Activity #7*)

- Establish a task group that can identify current school practices that promote or hinder the home-school partnership.
- Based on a needs assessment, identify areas for focus and program development.
- Develop a plan of action that identifies resources (financial, people, time, physical) needed to carry out the plan.
- Recognize that developing a comprehensive home-school partnership program is a 3-5 year commitment.

Activity #1: Introduction

Objectives:
1. To help participants become acquainted with each other
2. To review the key concept, purpose, and learner objectives of the workshop

Recommended Time: 10 minutes, shorter version; 15 minutes, longer version

Directions and Procedures

1. Prior to the workshop post four symbols (fire, wind, water, earth) in each corner of the room (or arrange materials on the table if using the alternate warm-up activity). ***Eliminate the warm-up activity if time is limited and proceed with points 2, 6 and 7.***

2. Introduce yourself and present the key concept which will serve as the focus of the workshop. ***Use T-1.***

3. Ask participants to select a symbol that best typifies their school's relationship to families, and then, to go stand by the symbol. Once they have formed a group, each participant should introduce him or herself to the group and state why he or she picked that symbol. Ask one person to be a reporter for each group to summarize some of the key reasons why a symbol was chosen and what aspects of the relationship that symbol represents. If there is room and the longer version of this workshop is being conducted, post a blank sheet of chart paper on the wall next to the symbol to use in recording ideas. ***Use T-2 (or T-2a) to provide directions for the activity. Allow 4-6 minutes.***

4. Debrief the activity by asking the reporter from each group to share some of the key ideas mentioned. Usually the symbol is chosen for positive or negative reasons (e.g., our relationship with families is like the wind, we are always blowing hot or cold, or our relationship is like a fire on a winter's night—warm and comforting). Acknowledge this reality by sharing that building good relationships with families is not easy and that there will be both positive and negative aspects of each school's relations with parents. ***Allow 2-4 minutes.***

5. Ask participants to return to their seats. State that the purpose of the workshop is to assist administrators, teachers, other school staff, and parent leaders to work together effectively to develop schoolwide guidelines, programs and practices which lead to a strong home-school partnership with all families, and which enable families to better support student learning at home. ***Use T-3 to share purpose.***

   Point out that throughout this workshop the terms *home-school partnership* will be used.

   In the context of this workshop, *home-school partnership* is defined as the mutual collaboration, support, and participation of families and school staff at home or at the school site in activities and efforts that directly and positively affect the success of children's learning and progress in school. ***Use T-4.***

6. Review learner objectives (*T-5*). Ask participants if there are other areas of major concern for them. If some are raised, note them on chart pad and indicate which ones will be addressed in activities of this workshop and which will need to be explored at another time.

7. Review agenda which has been posted. (***Note:*** *Use the outline of activities given above to develop the agenda, however, it is best not to include time references on the agenda posted for participants*).

Alternative Warm-up Activity:

Note: this alternative warm-up activity is designed to raise the same kinds of issues as in the first warm-up activity, but through a more individually creative approach. Select the warm-up that has the most appeal to you.

1. Ask each participant to write a word, phrase, or motto or draw a sketch that best illustrates the school's relationship to its families, using crayons and / or felt pens and drawing paper, which have been placed on each table. ***Allow 3-4 minutes.*** (***Use T-2A to display directions for the activity***).

2. Then ask participants to introduce themselves to the others at their table, and in one minute share their poster and explain their choice of word, motto or drawing, and briefly describe a practice at their school that best illustrates it. Ask a recorder at each table to record the school practices. ***Allow 6-7 minutes. If there is wall space, posters can be displayed.***

3. Debrief the activity by having the recorder for each group share with the entire group the list of school practices. Link these practices to the workshop theme.

4. Continue as above, stating the purpose of the workshop. (***Use T-3.***) and defining home-school partnerships, using ***T-4.***

5. Review learner objectives (***T-5***). Ask participants if there are other areas of major concern for them and note which ones will be addressed in activities of this workshop.

6, Review agenda which has been posted.

Activity #2: Identify the need for school level actions to build a strong partnership with families

Objective: To gain an understanding of the importance of school level practices which support teachers and other school staff to work effectively with parents

Recommended Time: 15 minutes, shorter version; 20 minutes, longer version

Directions and Procedures

1. Point out that for the next few minutes you want to discuss why it is important to develop schoolwide programs and practices which will support teachers and other school staff to work effectively with parents. While it is teachers who have the most direct contact with parents, the schoolwide context can either support or hinder individual teacher partnership efforts.

   a. **Culture of schools.** Schools develop pervasive cultures. Embodied in the culture are beliefs and attitudes about the families of the children who attend the school. These beliefs shape the school's patterns of interaction with families. The patterns of interaction may create an open, positive, and welcoming environment and culture, or a closed and defensive one where parents know they are not really welcome. The pattern may even vary within the school for different groups of parents, especially if students come from diverse ethnic and linguistic backgrounds. The selection of a symbol to represent your school's relationship with families, while on one level was superficial, on another level may well reflect deeply held beliefs and values that are affecting relationships among parents, teachers, support staff, and administrators, and preventing the development of a strong, mutually-supportive home-school partnership . (***Use examples shared in the warm-up activity to illustrate.***)

   If schools want families to be more actively engaged with their children's learning both at school and at home, one of the first tasks will be to examine the school's culture to make sure parents are truly welcome. This will include examining the attitudes and actions of custodians and gardeners, secretaries, classroom assistants, cafeteria workers, and bus drivers as well as of administrators and teachers, counselors, librarian and nurse. (*One of the best ways of finding out how parents feel about the school's environment and culture is to ask them. Some of the assessment activities that accompany the workshops can be used to assist school staff in this task*).

   b. **Change through a schoolwide approach.** Some urban schools have established positive relationships with parents, and as a result, student achievement improves (Henderson, 19881, 1983). The changing of relationships from negative to positive is usually the result of schoolwide efforts and actions. In other words, the school culture is changed.

c. **Individual teacher efforts important, but not sufficient.** The work of Epstein and Becker (1982; and Epstein, 1987; Tangri and Moles, 1987) showed that some individual teachers made extra efforts to reach out to families, inviting them to be partners in their children's education. These teachers shared information with parents, gave them tips on how to help their children especially with language arts and reading activities, and involved a few parents as volunteers in the classroom. As a result, students in these teachers' classrooms registered higher achievement gains in reading, teachers felt better supported by parents, and parents felt better informed and more positive toward the teachers. ***(In the shorter version,*** *point out that the benefits enjoyed by each of the partners—teachers, administrators, students, parents—is listed in the introduction of the* ***Participant Workbook.*** ***In the longer version Use T-6-9 Benefits of Home-School Partnership Program to summarize findings).***

However, these teachers often operated in isolation, unsupported by schoolwide programs, thus minimizing the potential schoolwide impact of their efforts.

d. **The power of a coordinated approach.** Effective schools research has shown the power of a coordinated approach. Teachers are best supported when schoolwide characteristics of effectiveness are addressed. Similarly, individual school efforts are greatly enhanced when carried out within the context of district improvement efforts. This is why one of the workshops in this series addresses school district policies and practices in regard to parent involvement.

Teddlie, Kirby, and Stringfield (1989) found that schools that had higher levels of student achievement and displayed high levels of schoolwide effectiveness characteristics, also had stronger classroom instructional programs. In other words, good teaching practices are strengthened when the whole school is effective. Rosenholtz (1989) found that the school learning climate and discipline are set at the schoolwide level and reinforced at the classroom level, not *vice versa*.

A similar case for schoolwide actions can be made in regard to strengthening home-school relations in general, and in increasing family involvement in home learning activities, in particular. If district policies and support are provided, this will assist each school in the district to implement home-school partnership initiatives. In turn schoolwide guidelines, programs, and practices will enable individual teacher efforts to have maximum effect. The remainder of this workshop will explore the schoolwide elements necessary to develop a comprehensive approach to parent involvement.

e. In developing schoolwide guidelines, programs, and practices, one last word is necessary. It is absolutely essential to involve parents in the developmental process. If families are to become true partners with schools, the place to begin is with their active participation in developing the programs that are meant to serve their needs. The activities and information presented in this workshop will allow you to share what you are doing already to work with families as well as learn what other schools are doing. The last section of this workshop will address some of the next steps to take in reaching out to parents.

Note: Teacher strategies are given in the workshop on Communication Strategies and in the workshop Homework and Home Learning. District roles and responsibilities are presented in the workshop School District Policies and Support, If these workshops are to be offered, you may want to bring them to the attention of the participants at this point to help them see the big picture.

Activity #3: Identify schoolwide factors that promote and hinder the development of home-school partnerships and family participation

Objectives: To identify school factors which promote or hinder family participation and support of student learning both at school and at home

Recommended Time: 20 minutes, shorter version; 30 minutes, longer version

Directions and Procedures

1. Point out that in this next activity the group will explore the **school factors** that promote and those that hinder family participation both at home and at school. Reinforce the purpose of the activity, by stating that you realize that many families in urban schools face harsh personal and community environments which negatively impact parent involvement in student learning both at school and at home. However, for purposes of this activity, you want participants to focus on school factors that promote or hinder home-school partnerships.

2. Divide participants into groups of five to six participants. Ask half of the groups to brainstorm a list of schoolwide factors / actions that promote home-school partnerships, especially family participation in home learning activities with their children. Ask the other half of the groups to brainstorm schoolwide factors that hinder such participation.

   To quickly clarify the task, give each group a 4 x 6 task card with one of the following sets of directions and information.

Group Task Card
School Factors which Promote Home-School Partnerships, Especially Family Participation in Student Learning at Home and at School.

Select a group facilitator and recorder. Record your ideas on the chart paper provided. Your group is to identify school factors which promote home-school partnerships. Draw on your own experiences at your schools. Some examples might be:
- assistants in the office who speak language of the parents;
- parent workshops on how to help with homework;
- after school homework center staffed by community volunteers and high school students;
- home reading program for kindergarten students.

Your group will have 6-8 minutes for discussion. When the time is up, join a group which has brainstormed hindering factors. As the hindering group shares their factors, discuss how some of the promoting factors identified by your group could help over come the barriers. You will have 8-10 minutes for discussion.

Group Task Card
School Factors which Hinder Home-School Partnerships, Especially Family Participation in Student Learning at Home and at School

Select a group facilitator and recorder. Record your ideas on the chart paper provided. Your group is to identify school factors which hinder home-school partnerships. Draw on your own experiences at your schools. Some examples might be:

- no one in the front office who speaks the major languages spoken by our parents;
- no information provided to parents on how to help their children with schoolwork;
- school newsletter not translated into major languages spoken by parents;
- no materials available or time provided for teachers to develop home learning materials;
- homework guidelines in place, but they are not systematically followed by teachers.

Your group will have 6-8 minutes for discussion. When the time is up, join a group which has brainstormed promoting factors. Share your group's hindering factors first. Then ask the other group to share factors they discussed which could help overcome the barriers. As a combined group discuss any other ideas you have for overcoming barriers. You will have 8-10 minutes for discussion.

Prepare sufficient numbers of each type of task card, based on the total number of participants (that is, one task card is needed for each group that you plan to have). Provide each team with chart paper and marking pen. Tell participants they will have ***6-8 minutes for the initial brainstorming and 8-10 minutes for their combined sharing***. ***Note:*** *Slightly longer time frames can be allowed for brainstorming and discussion, if the longer version of the workshop is being conducted.*

3. Close the activity by posting promoting and hindering charts and asking each combined group to share **one** schoolwide action they think would be most helpful in promoting home-school partnerships and strengthening parent support of student learning. Keep charts and refer to them in Activity #5.

Activity #4: Link characteristics of effective schools with characteristics of successful home learning environments

Objectives:
1. To understand the link between effective schools and successful home learning environments
2. To use the effective schools framework to identify school practices that foster and support family involvement in student learning

Recommended Time: 20 minutes, shorter version; 30 minutes, longer version

Directions and Procedures

1. **Give the following Mini-Lecture:** Linking Effective Schools with Successful Home Learning Environments

   a. **Defining effective schools characteristics.** Begin by asking how many are familiar with effective schools research and are implementing improvement efforts based on the research in their schools?

   Note: if the participants are familiar with the research, ask them to identify some of the characteristics of an effective school, listing them on a chart pad. If they are not familiar, you may need to spend a little time reviewing the definition of an effective school and the characteristics. A quick review with the information presented below is sufficient.

   Point out that effective schools research has identified a number of characteristics that distinguish schools with high achievement for all subgroups of students from those whose student achievement is average or below average. These characteristics vary in number from 5 to 14, depending on how the characteristics are clustered or the time and place of the research. For the purposes of discussion and for this workshop, the seven most frequently mentioned or cited characteristics are used (***Use T-10, and refer participants to Activity Sheet #1***).

   - Leadership by Principal and Staff (L)
   - Home-School Relations (HSR)
   - Clear School Mission and Academic Focus (CSM & AF)
   - Frequent Monitoring of Student Progress and School Programs (FM)
   - Opportunity to Learn and Time-on-Task (OL & TT)
   - Positive, Safe Learning Environment that Rewards and Recognizes Students and Staff (PSLE)
   - High Expectations (HE)

   b. **Implementing effective schools improvement efforts.** Stress to participants that while the characteristics are familiar to many, the complex task of implementing this web of interactive characteristics is a challenging one. Point out that the effective schools characteristics have relevance to building home-school partnerships in two ways:

   First, good home-school relations have been identified as one of the characteristics of an effective school. This usually means that parents are kept well informed about the school's mission, specific learning objectives, and student progress. Parent contact with the school is welcomed and encouraged and parents are engaged in many activities which support student learning. These points are discussed in more detail in the *Communication Strategies* workshop.

Second, it is important to become aware of effective schools characteristics because they have many similarities with characteristics of successful family learning environments, (which were discussed in the workshop on *Families as Learning Environments*). These similarities, as will be shown in a few minutes, can be used to guide the development of home-school partnership programs and activities.

c. **Linking the characteristics of successful family learning environments with effective schools characteristics.** Ask participants to think about some of the characteristics that operated in their own homes when they were children which they think promoted their success in school.

Note: If participants attended the Families as Learning Environments workshop, they will have generated a similar list. Remind participants of some of those characteristics by referring to ***Activity Sheet #2 and showing T-11.***

If participants have not attended the Family Workshop, take a few minutes to record some of their families' actions on chart paper. Point out that research on family practices which support student learning has identified similar characteristics. Families from diverse backgrounds and economic levels.have been found to engage in many of these practices, and when they do their children do better in school.

Refer participants to ***Activity Sheet #2****, Characteristics of Successful Home Learning Environments.* ***Use T-11 to summarize.***

Give participants a few minutes to review Activity Sheets # 1 and #2. Ask if there are any questions about the lists of effective school characteristics or characteristics of successful family learning environments.

In pairs, ask participants to place in the margin of ***Activity Sheet #2*** the effective schools characteristics that are most similar to each of the seven characteristics of effective home learning environments. Point out that some of the effective schools characteristics will apply to more than one of the family characteristics listed on ***Activity Sheet #2. Allow three or four minutes, Use T-12*** to summarize. Point out that the activities at home and school will vary, but the characteristics are remarkably similar.

2. **Using the effective schools framework to enhance home-school partnerships.**

   a. Stress that research on home-school relations has shown that schools, by their actions, can enhance the home learning environments of their students. Such school actions are all the more critical in schools serving low-income students from diverse backgrounds. The effective schools research, which, as they have seen, parallels the characteristics of successful family learning environments points the way to the kinds of practices and actions schools need to take to strengthen family learning environments in ways that will promote student learning at school and at home.

   b. **In the shorter version of this workshop**, refer participants to ***Activity Sheet #3***, which shows ways in which the effective schools framework can guide the development of comprehensive home-school partnership activities, especially ones that strengthen learning at home. ***Using T-13,*** describe the following example: Frequent monitoring of school program effectiveness and student progress has been shown to be a characteristic of effective schools. Monitoring student activities and school progress are also practices of successful home learning environments. Schools can assist families in the monitoring of student development and progress by undertaking some of the activities shown on this transparency and listed in ***Activity Sheet #3.*** Suggested activities are given for each of the other effective schools characteristics. ***Allow participants four minutes*** to review list of possible actions. Inform participants that they can review the list more leisurely at home or at a school planning committee, PTA or school council meeting, check activities they are already doing, and add their own ideas of possible actions the school could take to reinforce each characteristic.

c. **In the longer version of this workshop,** divide participants into six groups. Ask each group to review one of the list of activities identified under the effective schools characteristics on ***Activity Sheet #3***. Give each group a blank transparency with the appropriate characteristic the group is reviewing listed at the top (i.e., high expectations, home-school relations, leadership, opportunity to learn and time on task, clear mission and academic focus, positive, safe learning environment), and a transparency pen. Ask each group after reviewing the list to brainstorm any additional school actions which would reinforce and embed that characteristic in the home environment. ***Allow 7 minutes for brainstorming and recording ideas.***

Have a reporter from each group share their transparency. ***Allow 8-10 minutes for sharing.***

3. **Closing the activity**. Point out that
   - these are suggested activities, not exhaustive or prescriptive lists, each school needs to develop activities that fit its context and are doable;
   - not every activity will address every component of the frameworks;
   - there will be overlap in activities—an activity that enhances monitoring of student progress is likely to help parents understand the school's academic mission and may help to raise expectations;
   - the effective schools framework can be used to check current activities to see that they address characteristics that have been shown to be helpful in building strong home-school partnerships and home learning environments, and to identify gaps in current programs.
   - many of the new Chapter 1 requirements for parent involvement can be met and exceeded by implementing some of the suggesting listed under each of the effective schools characteristics.

Activity #5: Understand Five Types of Home-School Partnership Roles

Objective: To present five types of partnership roles and to show how they relate to the effective schools framework.

Recommended Time: 10 minutes, shorter version; 20 minutes longer version

Directions and Procedures:

1. Refer participants to ***Activity Sheet #4*** in the Participant Workbook (***and use T-14***). Explain that this sheet presents five home-school partnership roles. These roles have been identified as key elements of a comprehensive partnership program that supports student learning. (Chrispeels, 1987; Epstein, 1987; Henderson, Marburger, Ooms, 1986; Keesling, 1980; Lyons, Robbins, and Smith, 1982). Both home and school share in the roles and responsibilities, but schools must provide the climate, support, and initiative for building the partnership.

   a. Using ***Activity Sheet #4 (and T-14, Home-School Partnership Continuum)*** briefly explain the five roles. Stress that communication is the foundation for all other partnership roles. If the school focuses on strengthening two-way home-school communications, many of the other roles become much easier to implement. Efforts must continually be made to reach all families. Point out that the roles are arranged in pyramid fashion in this transparency, because the roles build one upon another and overlap one with another. For example, if communication is well developed, families will be provided with many opportunities to learn about the school and will know how they can support and assist their child in learning activities at home. To some extent, each role requires more active participation, commitment and skill; therefore, each role is likely to involve fewer families. This fact does not diminish the school's responsibility to reach out to all families, nor should non-participation be interpreted as apathy and lack of interest or support.

      Point out that research has shown that enhancing communications, and increasing the opportunities for learning and teaching are the roles that will have the greatest impact on student learning. Traditionally, however, most efforts to involve parents have centered around support roles, especially fund-raising, open house, and social events. Support events are important, but should be examined in terms of how they support and facilitate the other roles.

      Stress that far fewer families will be involved at the decision-making and advocacy level. This is true of all organizations be it a teachers union or administrators' association. Too often school staff spend too much time worrying about how few parents are involved at this level, when the focus of attention needs to be on home-school communication, opportunities for parents to support their children and the school, and opportunities for parents to be learners and teachers.

   b. ***Allow 2-3 minutes*** for participants to review ***Activity Sheet #4*** and ask if there are any questions about the roles and definitions.

   c. ***Note: In the longer version, participants should review Activity Sheet #3 again and spend a few minutes discussing which of the activities represent the various home-***

school partnership roles—co-communicator, supporter, learner, teacher, and advocacy and decision-making. Not all roles are represented by the activities listed, but for all of the effective schools categories, most of the roles are represented.

Ask participants why it is valuable to examine home-school partnership activities from these two frames of reference—home-school partnership roles and effective schools? (For example, some activities become obvious from an effective schools framework, whereas other possible activities come to light when thinking in terms of the roles. When combined, the school is more likely to develop a comprehensive approach to parent involvement which will be most likely to enhance student achievement.) ***Allow 5-6 minutes for review and discussion.***

Activity #6: Analyze two case studies of comprehensive home-school partnership programs that support student learning

Objective: To understand how the partnership roles and effective schools framework can be used to analyze and plan exemplary home-school partnership programs.

Recommended Time: 25 minutes, shorter version; 40 minutes longer version

Directions and Procedures:

1. Explain that now participants have gained an understanding of the effective schools framework and the five partnership roles, they are going to read two case studies of comprehensive home-school partnership programs. The extensive partnership activities undertaken by these schools have been organized in relation to the five partnership roles. The effective schools characteristics that are reinforced by the activity are indicated in parentheses.

2. Divide participants into groups of five.

   a. Refer participants to ***Activity Sheet #5,*** which summarizes the two case studies, ***and Activity Sheet #6, Case Study Reading and Discussion Guide***.

   b. Ask each group to number off one through five. Each participant will read the background for the case study schools and one of the roles describing the activities undertaken by the two schools (that is, number one reads the background plus the description about home and school as co-communicators for St. John the Baptist School and Willard Model School; number two read the background and the section on home and school as co-supporters for both school, and so forth) Each participant should then complete the relevant section of ***Activity Sheet #6, Case Study Reading and Discussion Guide***.

   c. Allow ***10 minutes*** for each participant to review their assigned section and record their reactions and responses to the questions on ***Activity Sheet #6, Case Study Reading and Discussion Guide***.

   d. Tell participants that after the case study has been read, each group member should share their reactions to the case studies with the others. Ask one member of each group to record new ideas and suggestions for activities from participants' schools which were listed in response to the second part of each person's question on ***Activity Sheet #6***. Provide chart paper or a blank transparency. ***Allow 10 minutes for discussion***.

3. Close the activity by asking each group to share additional activities their group identified. ***Allow 5 minutes for sharing in the shorter version*** (in the interest of time, ask each group to report new ideas for only one of the roles) ***and 15-20 minutes for sharing and discussion in the longer version*** .

   Explain to participants that they can use the format in which the case studies were presented to organize and describe their own school's home-school partnership program. It is an easy way to take stock and to see which of the roles are strongest. In addition, ***Activity Sheet #3*** can be used as a checklist to review current practices and as an organizing format for assessing home-school partnership activities.

C-21

Activity #7: Take the Next Steps: Develop a Plan of Action

Objectives: To identify several next steps to take once participants have returned to their schools.

Recommended Time: 15 minutes, shorter version; 30 minutes longer version

Directions and Procedures

Note: If school teams of administrator, teachers, and parents are attending this workshop, regroup participants into school teams so that the school can begin planning to meet its own needs. If participants are from different schools, they can remain in the same groups as assigned in the previous activity, in which case, the planning activity will involve more sharing of ideas rather than developing a specific plan of action. If only one or two people are attending from a school, point out that they will want to record their ideas on the ***Next Steps Planning Sheet****, but will need to return to their school and organize a planning team to be able to proceed further with implementation.*

1. Point out that to implement ideas learned in this workshop will require planning as well as possibly learning new skills. Both parents and school staff are likely to need support and additional information.

2. Briefly present the following points about how the school might go about developing an action plan to strengthen their home-school partnership program.

    a. Review the material learned at this workshop as well as school data about the school's current parent involvement and partnership program. Share the information at a faculty meeting and solicit input from the staff about preliminary next steps. Invite staff members to join and participate in a planning task group.

    b. Form a home-school partnership task group of parents, teachers, principal, community members, if one does not already exist. For example, a number of schools are involved in restructuring efforts. As a result, the school may already have a restructuring committee. Participants to this workshop can request that a task group work on strengthening home-school partnership activities be established as a subcommittee of the restructuring committee. The subcommittee or task group needs to be composed of key parent leaders, representative of the school community, teachers, classified personnel such as a custodian or secretary, and an administrator, if possible.

    c. Use data about current practices; decide which areas need to be strengthened.

    d. Use parent and teacher surveys to identify priorities and training/informational needs (for example, use surveys in the Families Workshop Leader's Guide). To identify parent training needs, provide a list of possible workshop topics to parents for them to choose which ones are most needed and wanted. Survey the staff to determine areas in which the staff wants more assistance. Within this workshop series there are three additional ones designed to meet school staff needs: ***Families as Learning Environments, Communication Strategies, and Homework and Home Learning Activities.*** Other staff development workshops may be desired such as one on designing quality homework or parent-teacher conferencing.

e. Develop an action plan. The plan should fit with other school priorities. For example, if the school is focusing on implementing a literature-based reading program, the parent involvement learning activities should also address this theme. If hands-on science is the year's focus, again, develop a variety of programs and approaches that will help parents reinforce this in-school curriculum in the home.

f. Discuss the action plan with the entire faculty to gain support and greater participation in implementation.

g. Celebrate small gains and changes in home-school relations.

h. Evaluate the impact of efforts on parents, student and teachers.

i. Set new goals each year and recognize that building a comprehensive home-school partnership program will take three to five years.

3. Refer participants to ***Activity Sheet #7 (T-15)*** and ask them individually to complete the worksheet. Point out that if even the school has a team at the workshop, it is important to have time for individual reflection before discussing and developing a team plan. ***Allow about 5 minutes in the short version, 5-10 minutes in the longer version.***

   a. ***If this is the two-hour version of this workshop,*** state that what each person has just recorded on ***Activity Sheet #7*** will serve as a basis for beginning planning when they return to their school.

   Close the activity by asking each participant or group to share one next step they will take after the workshop. Remind participants that planning needs to be an ongoing process and that this is just the beginning. To really bring about change at their school, will require more work once they return to their site. Hopefully, this activity has given them a sense of where to begin. ***(Note:*** *If the group will be returning in the near future for the next workshop, encourage them to bring a progress report on their action steps to the workshop.)* ***Allow 5 minutes.***

   b. ***If this is the longer version of the workshop,*** and if school teams are attending the workshop, state that team members should now share what they have written on the ***Next Steps Planning Sheet.*** The team recorder should be given a blank ***Activity Sheet #7*** to record the team's consensus. Remind participants that they may want to refer to the barriers and solutions charts generated in ***Activity #3***, when they come to the last part of ***Activity Sheet #7***.

   If participants are not in teams, ask them to share with other each other what would be next steps for them . Discuss who else needs to be involved; how will they proceed; what more information more is needed; and what might get in their way? ***Allow 15 minutes***

   Close the activity by asking each participant or group to share a next step they will take after the workshop. Remind participants that planning needs to be an ongoing process and that this is just the beginning. To really bring about change at their school, will require more work once they return to their site. Hopefully, this activity has given them a sense of where to begin. ***(Note:*** *If the group will be returning in the near future for the next workshop, encourage them to bring a progress report on their action steps to the workshop.)* ***Allow 5 minutes.***

Activity #8: Summary and Conclusion

Objective: The purpose of this activity is to help participants think about what has been learned in the workshop.

Recommended Time: 5 minutes, shorter version; 10 minutes longer version

Directions and Procedures

1. Conclude by reviewing key concept and purpose of the workshop. Review objectives and how the activities addressed the objectives.

   Points to cover: Even though families are children's first and important teachers, schools also have strong impacts on children. In particular, schools influence children's knowledge, their self-concept and confidence as a learner, and their willingness to continue in school through grade 12. In addition to the strong influence teachers have on children during the school hours, schools can also influence the learning environment in the home. Through activities in this workshop, participants have explored some of the ways schools can be more proactive in shaping and influencing the home learning environments of their students.

2. Workshop evaluation and closing.

   Close by reminding participants of the benefits presented at the beginning of the workshop (which are listed at the beginning of the Participant Workbook) that each will enjoy when home and school work as partners. Building a strong home-school partnership will require extra efforts, but the payoff for students are high.

   If participants will be attending the next workshop in the series, ***Communication Strategies,*** or ***Homework and Home Learning Activities,*** ask them to talk with teachers at their school and ask them to share:

   - classroom factors that hinder family involvement,
   - strategies they have found effective in communicating with parents,
   - kinds of information they are sharing with parents to enable them to assist with homework
   - types of teacher initiated home-learning activities they send to families.

   Thank participants for their active involvement and ask them to complete the ***Participant Evaluation Form, Activity Sheet #7***.

3. Soon after the workshop complete the Workshop Leader's Evaluation Form. Then summarize the participants' reactions on the Leader's Summary of the Participant Evaluation Forms. Both are at the end of this guide. Send all completed forms to the project director (name and address are listed on Summary Form).

References and Suggested Readings

Borger, J. B., Lo, C. L., Oh, S. S., & Walberg, H. J.. (1985, April). Effective schools: A quantitative synthesis of constructs. Paper delivered at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, Chicago.

Chrispeels, J. A. (1987, April). The family as an educational resource. Community Education Journal, 14(3), 10-17.

Comer, J. P. (1980). School power. New York: Free Press.

Comer, J. P. (1987). New Haven's school-community connection. Educational Leadership, 44 (6), 13-16.

Comer, J. P. (1988). Educating poor minority children. Scientific American, 259(5), 42-48.

Comer, J. P. (1988). *Maggie's American Dream.* New York: Plume.

Epstein, J. L. (1987). Parent Involvement: What Research Says to Administrators,. *Education and Urban Society*, 19, 119-136.

Epstein, J. L. &, Becker, H. J. (1982, November). Teachers' reported practices of parent involvement: Problems and possibilities. *Elementary School Journal*, 83, 103-113.

Goodson, B. D., Swartz, J. P., and Millsap, M A. (1991). *Working with Families: Promising Programs to Help Parents Support Young Children's Learning*. Cambridge, MA: Abt Associates.

Gordon, I. (1978) *What Does Research Say About the Effects of Parent Involvement on Schooling?* Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

Harris, L., Kagay, M., Ross, J. (1987). *Metropolitan Life survey of the American teacher: Strengthening links between home and school.* New York: Louis Harris and Associates.

Henderson, A. T. (Ed.). (1981). *Parent Participation-Student Achievement: The Evidence Grows.* Columbia, MD: National Committee for Citizens in Education.

Henderson, A. T.(Ed.). (1987). *The Evidence Continues to Grow: Parent Involvement Improves Student Achievement*. Columbia, MD: National Committee for Citizens in Education.

Henderson, A.T., Marburger, C. L., Ooms, T. (1986). *Beyond the Bake Sale: An Educators' Guide to Working with Parents.* Columbia, MD: National Committee for Citizens in Education.

Keesling, J. W. (1980). *Parents and Federal Education Programs: Preliminary Findings from the Study of Parent Involvement*. Santa Monica, CA: Systems Development Corporation.

Levine, D. U., & Lezotte, L. W. (1990). *Unusually effective schools: An interpretive review and analysis of research and practice*. Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press.

C-25

Lightfoot, S. L. (1978). *Worlds Apart*. New York: Basic Books.

Lyons, P., Robbins, A., Smith, A. (1982) *Involving Parents: A Handbook for Participation in Schools*. Santa Monica, CA: Systems Development Corporation.

Mortimore, P. Sammons, P., Stoll, L., Lewis, D., & Ecob, R. (1988). *School Matters*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Rosenholtz, S. J. (1989). *Teachers' Workplace*. New York: Longman.

Stedman, L. C. (1987). It's time we changed the effective schools formula. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 69 (3), 215-224.

Tangri, S. and Moles, O. (1987). Parents and the Community. In Richardson-Koehler, V. (Ed.), *Educator's Handbook*. New York: Longman Press.

Teddlie, C., Kirby, P. C. & Stringfield, S. (1989, March) *Effective versus ineffective schools: observable differences in the classroom*. Paper presented at the American Educational Research Association Annual Meeting, San Francisco, CA.

Tizard, J., Schofield, W.N., and Hewison, J. (1982). Collaboration Between Teachers and Parents in Assisting Children's Reading, *British Journal of Educational Psychology*, 52 (1) 1-11.

Topping, K. and Wolfendale S. (Eds.). (1985). *Parental Involvement in Children's Reading*. Beckenham, England: Croon Helm.

Walberg, H. J. (1984, February). Families as partners in educational productivity. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 66 (2), 397-400.

Walberg. H. J., Paschal, R. A. & Weinstein, T. (1985, April). Homework's powerful effects on learning. *Educational Leadership*, 42(7), 76-79.

Walberg, J. J. Bole, R. E., and Waxman, H. C. (1980). School-Based Family Socialization and Reading Achievement in the Inner-City, *Psychology in the Schools*, 17, 509-514.

WORKSHOP LEADERS EVALUATION FORM

Building Home-School Partnerships for Learning

Leader's Name: ______________________ Date Given: _____

Name of Workshop: ______________________ Amount of Time Used: ____

School District: ______________________ State: _____

1. What was the most successful aspect of this workshop? Why?

2. What was the least successful? Why?

3. Did you change or cut out any parts of this workshop? If yes (a) which parts, b) what changes did you make, and (c) why did you change or cut them?

4. If this workshop is revised, what should be changed about:
    a. instructions in leader's guide

    b. workbook materials

    c. times allotted to activities

5. Other comments? Please continue on other side.

Thank you for giving us your thoughts on your experience with this workshop. May we have your phone number in case we need further information? Phone: ______________________

C-27

LEADER'S SUMMARY OF PARTICIPANT EVALUATION FORMS

Leader's Name: ______________________________

Name of Workshop: ______________________________ Date Given: _____

School(s): ______________________________ District: __________

Estimate number of participants: male _____ and female _____

Estimate number who were
_____ African American
_____ White
_____ Hispanic
_____ Asian American
_____ other (specify) ____________________________

Participants in this workshop consisted of (check all that apply):

_____ staff from a single school
_____ staff from several different schools within one school district
_____ staff from schools in several school districts
_____ school district officials and/or staff
_____ others: (specify) ______________________________________

Please summarize the last question from the Participant Evaluation Form by entering the total number of:

_____ K-3 grade teachers
_____ 4-6 grade teachers
_____ principals
_____ other school site professionals
_____ school district officials and/or staff members
_____ parents
_____ others

On a blank form please list all themes that are repeated across participants on the open-ended questions. (Read answers to one question at a time to detect common themes.) If your time does not permit this, we will summarize this information. It is more important to get all the forms back quickly.

Please send us this form, your own Leader's Evaluation Form, and all Participant Evaluation Forms. Mail to:

Oliver Moles, Project Director
Office of Research, OERI, U.S. Department of Education
555 New Jersey Ave., NW
Washington, DC 20208-5649 Phone: (202) 219-2211

School Programs and Practices

Transparency Masters

Table of Contents

Transparency and Title

T-1 Key Concept
T-2 Directions for Warm-up Activity
T-2A Directions for Alternative Warm-Up Activity
T-3 Workshop Purpose
T-4 Definition of Home-School Partnership
T-5 Learner Objectives
T-6 Benefits for Teachers
T-7 Benefits for Administrators
T-8 Benefits for Parents
T-9 Benefits for Students
T-10 Characteristics of Effective Schools
T-11 Characteristics of of Successful Home Learning Environments
T-12 Linking Effective Schools Characteristics with Characteristics of Successful Home-Learning Environments
T-13 Using an Effective Schools Framework to Plan Home-School Partnership Activities
T-14 Home-school Partnership Roles Continuum
T-15 Next Steps Planning Sheet

C-29

T-1

KEY CONCEPT

Schoolwide guidelines, programs, and practices are essential for the development of effective home-school partnerships that foster family involvement both at school and in school-related learning activities with children at home.

T-2

Directions for Warm-up Activity

- **Select and go to a symbol that best typifies your school's relationship with parents.**
- **Join other participants who selected that symbol and introduce yourself.**
- **Tell the group why you selected that symbol, describing one school action that reflects the symbol.**
- **Have one of your group members record reasons for the selection on the blank sheet next to the symbol.**
- **Have one of your group members ready to share some of the key reasons why the symbol was chosen by the group.**

T-2A

Directions for Warm-up Activity

- Using the materials at your table, write a word, phrase, motto, or draw a sketch that best illustrates your school's relationship to its families.

- Introduce your self to the others at your table and in one minute explain your poster (why you chose that word, motto, etc., and what school practice illustrates it).

- Ask one person to record school practices.

- The recorder for each group will share their list of school practices.

- Post posters with words, phrases, mottos, pictures.

T- 3

PURPOSE

To assist school staff and parent leaders in working effectively together to develop schoolwide guidelines, programs, and practices which:

- **lead to a strong home-school partnership with all families, and**
- **promote family participation in student learning activities at school and at home.**

C-33

T - 4

HOME-SCHOOL PARTNERSHIPS

are the mutual collaboration, support, and participation of parents and school staff at home or at the school site in activities and efforts that directly and positively affect the educational progress of children.

T-5

LEARNER OBJECTIVES

By the end of this workshop, participants will be able to:

1. Understand the importance of schoolwide programs and practices in developing strong home-school partnerships.

2. Identify schoolwide factors that promote or hinder home-school partnerships.

3. Understand the relationship between characteristics of effective schools and successful home learning environments.

4. Be able to identify five types of home-school partnership roles

5. Understand how to apply the partnership roles and effective schools framework to two case studies.

6. Identify several *next steps* to take to strengthen home-school partnerships.

T - 6

Benefits of Home-School Partnerships Programs

Teachers benefit through:

1. schoolwide training and discussion about working with families from diverse backgrounds;
2. support from the principal for their efforts to work with families;
3. tapping the knowledge, skills, and resources of colleagues;
4. maximizing limited resources and time through the cooperative development homework and home learning activities;
5. attaining a higher rate of return on homework and greater involvement of families in home learning activities;
6. increased parental support and cooperation.

T - 7

Benefits of Home-School Partnerships Programs

Administrators benefit through:

1. better communications between school and home;

2. fewer parent complaints about inconsistent and inappropriate homework;

3. better use of limited resources to address the critical need of linking home and school;

4. improved school climate where children see parents and teachers as partners.

T-8

Benefits of Home-School Partnerships Programs

Parents benefit through:

1. **opportunities to become partners with teachers and to shape important decisions that enhance their children's chances for success in school.**

2. **consistent expectations, practices, and messages about homework and home learning activities;**

3. **increased opportunities to engage in home learning activities with their children;**

4. **access to schoolwide resources such as, parent learning centers, homework hotlines, homework centers, parent workshops, and home visits.**

T-9

Benefits of Home-School Partnerships Programs

Students benefit through:

1. **more positive attitudes toward school;**
2. **higher achievement in reading;**
3. **higher quality and more grade appropriate homework;**
4. **completion of more homework on weekends;**
5. **Greater sense of familiarity between home and school.**

Becker and Epstein (1982)

T-10

Effective Schools Characteristics

1. Leadership by Principal and Staff (L)

2. Home-School Relations (HSR)

3 Clear Mission and Academic Focus (CM/AF)

4. Frequent Monitoring (FM)

5. Opportunity to Learn and Time-on-Task (OL/TT)

6. Positive, Safe Learning Environment (PSLE)

7 High Expectations (HE)

T-11

Characteristics of Successful Home Learning Environments

1. Establishing a Daily Family Routine
2. Monitoring Out-of-School Activities
3. Modeling the Value of Learning and Hard Work
4. Expressing High but Realistic Expectations for Achievement
5. Encouraging the Child's Overall Development and Progress in School
6. Reading, Writing and Discussions among Family Members
7. Using Community Resources to Meet Family Needs.

C-41

T - 12

Linking Characteristics of Effective Schools and Successful Home Learning Environments

Effective Schools Characteristics	Successful Home Learning Environment Characteristics
L, HE, PSLE	1. Establishing a Daily Routine
L, FM, PSLE,	2. Monitoring Out-of-School Activities
L, HE OL/TT	3. Modeling the Value of Learning and Hard Work
L, HE, CM/AF	4. High Expectations and Family Goals
L, HE, FM	5. Encouraging the Child's Overall Development and Progress in School
L, CM/AF, OL/TT	6. Reading, Writing and Discussions among Family Members
L, OL/TT, PSLE	7. Using Community Resources to meet family needs

T-13

Using an Effective Schools Framework to Plan Home-School Partnership Activities

Frequent Monitoring Activities

- Provide assignment calendars or homework journals.
- Use homework sign-off sheets or contracts.
- Send monthly progress reports.
- Make quarterly telephone calls home, especially to report progress and growth.
- Send two-way parent-teacher grams.
- Send home weekly folders of students' work.
- Hold regular parent-teacher conferences.
- Establish a homework buddy system.
- Install homework hotlines for assignments.

c -~~44~~
43

T-13a

Frequent Monitoring Activities (continued)

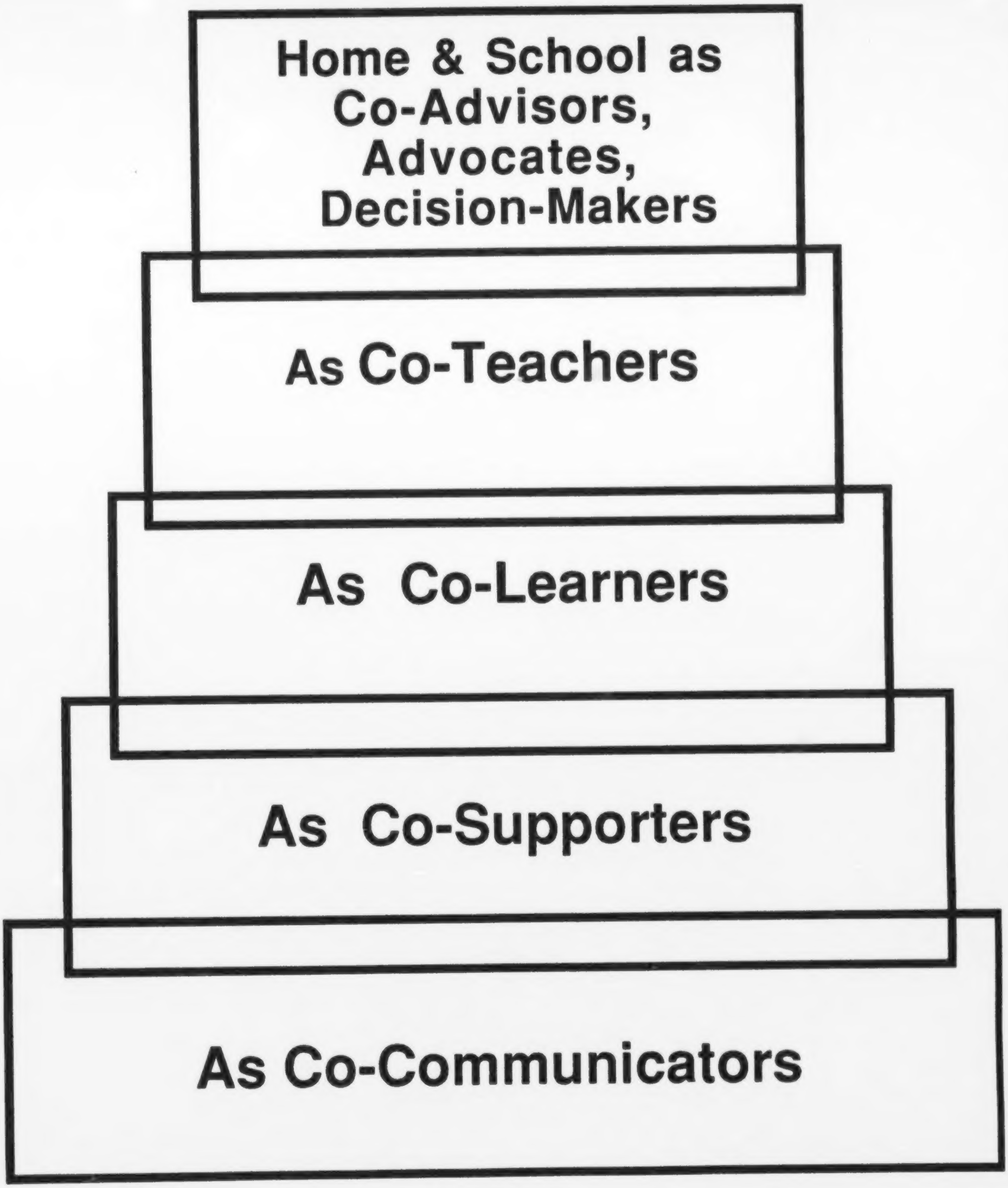
- Encourage classroom visitations and observations.
- Conduct workshops on how to supervise homework, monitor student progress.
- Host more frequent back-to-school or curriculum nights.

- Share an activity sheet on monitoring TV viewing.
- Provide activity sheet on time management.
- Publish articles on keeping student records, monitoring progress.

- Involve parents in student goal setting at parent-teacher conferences.
- Involve the school council in reviewing monitoring procedures and reporting of pupil progress and conducting curriculum reviews.

T-14

Home-School Partnership Roles Continuum



Home & School as
Co-Advisors,
Advocates,
Decision-Makers

As Co-Teachers

As Co-Learners

As Co-Supporters

As Co-Communicators

T-15

Activity Sheet #7

NEXT STEPS PLANNING SHEET

Based on what has been learned, the strengths of our school's current homework guidelines, practices and programs are:

Our school currently provides the following workshops and learning opportunities for parents in regard to homework and home learning.

Families are currently involved in home learning activities in the following ways:

T-15 (continued)

Activity Sheet #7a

NEXT STEPS PLANNING SHEET (continued)

Based on what has been learned, the next steps to take to strengthen homework and home learning activities are:

Step / Activity	Timeline	Resources Needed

Who else needs to be involved for these steps to be effective?

What problems might be encountered in taking these next steps?

Building Home-School Partnerships for Learning: Workshops for Urban Educators (Pilot Version)

School Programs and Practices

Participant Workbook

Table of Contents

Overview

Rationale, Purpose, and Learner Objectives
Benefits to Teachers, Administrators, Parents and Students from Home-School Partnership Initiatives

Activity Sheet Number and Title

1 Effective Schools Characteristics
2 Characteristics of Successful Learning Environments
3 Using the Effective Schools Framework to Design Home School Partnership Activities that Support Home Learning
4 Home-School Partnership Roles
5 Home School Partnership Activities from Willard Model School and St. John the Baptist Case Studies
6 Case Study Reading Guide
7 Next Steps Worksheet

Participant Evaluation Form

C-4

Overview

KEY CONCEPT

Schoolwide guidelines, programs, and practices are essential and necessary to the development of effective home-school partnerships that foster family involvement both at school and in school-related learning activities with children at home.

RATIONALE AND PURPOSE

Research on effective schools shows the importance of schoolwide goals, programs, and practices in bringing about changes in the school's organization, curriculum and instructional practices, and culture in ways that increase student achievement. The same schoolwide focus is also essential in building an effective home-school partnership and in implementing successful home learning activities and programs. When schoolwide practices, which have been cooperatively developed by parents, teachers, and other school staff, are initiated, everyone at the school benefits. Some of the benefits are (Epstein and Becker, 1982, Epstein, 1987, Henderson, 1981, 1987; Tangri and Moles, 1987) :

Teachers benefit through:

1. schoolwide training and discussion about how to work effectively with families from diverse backgrounds;
2. support from the principal for their efforts to work with families;
3. tapping the knowledge, skills, and resources of colleagues;
4. maximizing limited resources and time through the cooperative development of grade level homework and home learning activities;
5. a better understanding of parent expectations and closer communication with parents;
6. attaining a higher rate of return on homework and greater involvement of families in home learning activities;
7. increased parental support and cooperation.

Administrators benefit through:

1. better communications between school and home;
2. fewer parent complaints about inconsistent and inappropriate homework;
3. better use of limited resources to address the critical need of linking home and school;
4. improved school climate where children see parents and teachers as partners.

Parents benefit through:

1. opportunities to become partners with teachers and to shape important decisions that enhance their children's chances for success in school;
2. consistent expectations, practices, and messages about homework and home learning activities;
3. increased opportunities to engage in home learning activities with their children;
4. access to schoolwide resources such as, parent learning centers, homework hotlines, homework centers, parent workshops, and home visits.

Students benefit through:

1. more positive attitudes toward school;
2. higher achievement in reading;
3. higher quality and more grade appropriate homework;
4. completion of more homework on weekends;
5. observing more similarity between family and school.

Workshop Purpose:
The purpose of this workshop is to assist administrators, teachers, other school staff, and parent leaders to work effectively with families in identifying and developing schoolwide guidelines, programs, and practices which build effective home-school partnerships and which promote and support the participation of families in student learning activities at home.

LEARNER OBJECTIVES

By the end of this workshop, participants will be able to:

1. Understand the importance and necessity of schoolwide programs and practices in the development of strong home-school partnerships.
2. Identify schoolwide factors that promote or hinder home-school partnerships, especially parent involvement in student learning at home.
3. Understand the relationship between effective schools characteristics and family practices in successful home learning environments which support student learning both at school and at home.
4. Be able to identify five types of home-school partnership roles and to understand how they relate to the effective schools framework.
5. Understand how to apply the five home-school partnership roles and effective schools framework to two case studies
6. Know several *next steps* to take to strengthen each participant's home-school partnership program.

Activity Sheet #1

Effective Schools Characteristics

Leadership by Principal and Staff (L)

- Develop a leadership team that ensures all effective schools characteristics are in place and that continuous improvement is a fact of life.

Home-School-Community Relations (HSR)

- Provide multiple opportunities for families to be informed and involved in children's learning at school and at home.
- Prove opportunities to develop parenting skills
- Suggest how families can support children's learning.
- Encourage active participation by families in decisions affecting their children and the school.
- Share frequent information about student progress.
- Establish a parent organization to advise the school and
- Identify space that can be used to establish a family/paret room.
- Identify community resources to enrich curriculum and meet the needs of families.

Clear Mission and Academic Focus (CM / AF)

- Develop a clearly articulated mission statement with a strong academic focus that serves to drive school improvement.
- Identify a core of knowledge that all students are expected to master.
- Communicate frequently the mission and goals of the school to all.
- Develop instructional materials and methods to match mission and to ensure success for all students.
- Reflect mission in specific goals, objectives, and day-to-day actions by principal and staff.

Frequent Monitoring (FM)

- Assess student progress and program effectiveness regularly using disaggregated data.
- Provide information frequently to families about student progress and mastery of skills.
- Use data by teachers to continuously refine and improve teaching / instruction.
- Ensure congruence between goals, materials, methods and assessment.
- Ensure accountability for results is accepted by the entire staff.

Opportunity to Learn and Time-on-Task (OL / TT)

- Recognize time as a critical resource for learning.
- Protect instructional time carefully.
- Maximize learning time through a variety of teaching strategies.
- Extend learning time through regularly assigned and corrected homework.
- Group students heterogeneously to provide equal opportunities to all.
- Minimize time lost through disruptive behavior or transitions from one activity to another.
- Utilize after school programs to extended the learning time.

Activity Sheet #1a

Effective Schools Characteristics (continued)

Positive, Safe Learning Environment (PSLE)
- Establish and consistently enforce a schoolwide discipline code, cooperatively determined by all—schools staff, parents, students.
- Provide an orderly, purposeful and positive learning climate that is conducive for teaching for learning.
- Organize multiple opportunities and encouragement for all students to participate in school life and assume leadership roles.
- Recognize regularly students, staff, and parents for achievements and contributions to the school.
- Maxmize school and community efforts to maintain an attractive learning environment.
- Display students work and achievements, especially academic work, throughout the school.
- Develop school spirit and pride throughout the school.

High Expectations (HE)
- Teachers believe that all students can master core curriculum
- Teachers believe in their own skills and abilities to help all students learn the curriculum.
- Create structures and organizational procedure that facilitate teacher's continuous learning.
- Give all students access to a challenging curriculum.
- Try new learning approaches, if skills are not being mastered.
- Recognize students and staff for achievements and growth.
- Push students and staff to excel in all areas.
- Involve parents in student success through frequent communication and opportunities to be involved.

Activity Sheet #2

Characteristics of Successful Home Learning Environments

1. **Establishing a Daily Family Routine**
   - Providing time, space, quiet, and materials for child's studying, reading and hobbies
   - Assigning chores and regular household tasks
   - Encouraging good health habits: proper balance of rest and activity, regular breakfast and dinner schedules, good nutrition, health care as needed.

2. **Monitoring Out-of-School Activities**
   - Guiding the constructive use of leisure time: after-school activities, use of TV, and time with friends
   - Setting clear rules and standards
   - Discussing rules with child
   - Rewarding success and applying sanctions appropriately and consistently

3. **Modeling the Value of Learning and Hard Work**
   - Setting an example by reading at home and engaging in other learning activities
   - Encouraging effort for long-term gains vs short-term benefits
   - Playing games together (e.g. Scrabble, Monopoly, Dominoes) that require planning ahead, problem solving rather than pure luck
   - Communicating openly and encouraging verbal give-and-take

4. **Expressing High but Realistic Expectations for Achievement**
   - Setting developmentally appropriate goals and standards for child's conduct
   - Discussing regularly topics concerning education, careers, life skills, rules
   - Affirming personal worth through positive labeling and appreciation of the child as a winner

5. **Encouraging the Child's Overall Development and Progress in School**
   - Cultivating a warm and supportive home atmosphere
   - Expressing interest in child's education both at home and by attending school events
   - Urging child to work hard in school
   - Staying in touch with child's teachers
   - Expressing affection and approval
   - Noticing and rewarding achievement in school

6. **Reading, Writing and Discussions among Family Members**
   - Reading and listening to children read
   - Discussions of school day, family members' lives, and current events
   - Storytelling, recounting experiences, and sharing problem-solving strategies
   - Writing of all kinds (e.g., grocery lists, telephone messages, letters, diary entries)
   - Relating everyday experiences to what is being learned in school and using these experiences as teaching opportunities

7. **Using Community Resources to Meet Family Needs**
   - Exposing children to cultural activities (e.g., visits to library, museum, movies, concerts)
   - Enrolling children in youth enrichment programs (e.g., after-school sports or lessons, community programs, clubs).
   - Introducing children to responsible mentors (e.g., coaches, counselors, friends, staff of local organizations or churches)
   - Being aware of and using community services

C-53

Activity Sheet #3
Using the Effective Schools Framework to Plan Home-School Partnership Activities.

School already does	School Should try	Frequent Monitoring
		(Co-Communicator Strategies)
		Provide assignment calendars or homework journals.
		Use homework sign-off sheets or contracts.
		Send monthly progress reports.
		Make quarterly telephone calls home, especially to report progress and growth.
		Send two-way parent-teacher grams.
		Send home weekly folders of students' work.
		Hold regular parent-teacher conferences
		Establish a homework buddy system.
		Install homework hotlines for assignments.
		(Co-Learner Strategies)
		Encourage classroom visitations and observations.
		Conduct workshops on how to supervise homework, monitor student progress.
		Host more frequent back-to-school or curriculum nights.
		(Co-Teacher Strategies)
		Share an activity sheet on monitoring TV viewing.
		Provide an activity sheet on time management.
		Publish newsletter articles on how parents can keep student records and monitor progress.
		(Co-decision-maker strategies)
		Involve parents in student goal setting at parent-teacher conferences.
		Involve the school council in reviewing monitoring procedures, reporting of pupil progress, and conducting curriculum reviews.

School already does	School Should try	Opportunity to Learn and Time-on-Task
		(Co-Communicator Strategies)
		Share home learning ideas in the school newsletter.
		Share with parents, in the school newsletter, learning opportunities in the community
		Provide tips on time management for children in the newsletter.
		(Co-Supporter Strategies)
		Develop a computer home-lending program.
		Organize family field trips to cultural places and events.
		Organize an after school homework center.
		Provide extended-day child care services with enrichment activities.
		Develop a parent/community volunteer program

		Opportunity to Learn and Time-on-Task
		(Co-Learner Strategies)
		Organize family learning opportunities, such as Family Math or Family Science, etc.
		Provide parents with home learning materials.
		Sponsor home reading programs.
		(Co-Teacher Strategies)
		Encourage parents to share skills, expertise as a way of extending the class curriculum.
		Organize after school parent-led school enrichment programs for students.
		Assign meaningful, well-develop daily homework and provide guidelines on how parents are to help/support.
		Involve families in home learning acclivities.
		(Co-decision-maker strategies)
		Involve the school council and PTA in planning ways to extend learning opportunities.
		Form an alliance with other agencies and community resources to extend learning opportunities.

School already does	School Should try	**Clear School Mission and Academic Focus**
		(Co-Communicator Strategies)
		Provide grade or course level curriculum guides.
		Provide tips to parents on how they can help through the school newsletter, video tapes, or telephone message systems.
		Publicize academic awards, honors and test results in school and community newspapers.
		Communicate frequently to parents the school's mission through newsletters, telephone messages, school meetings.
		(Co-Supporter Strategies)
		Explore how support activities such as fundraisers, socials, carnivals, etc. can reinforce the school's academic focus (for example, a Halloween Carnival that has a literary character costume focus, or a reading or math marathon to raise funds).
		(Co-Learner Strategies)
		Tie parent or family workshops to curriculum focus, e.g., offer Family Math, Family Reading, or Family Science to emphasize school's academic focus.
		Conduct home visits to acquaint parents with the school's mission, curriculum, and suggest home learning strategies.
		Organize curriculum nights for parents every nine weeks and provide tips on how parents can help.
		(Co-Teacher Strategies)
		Identify parents' and community members' skills and expertise which link to the school's academic mission.
		(Co-decision-maker strategies)
		Involve parents and community in developing school's mission and goals.
		Form advisory committees to support each academic area.

C-55

Activity Sheet #3b

School already does	School Should try	High Expectations
		(Co-Communicator Strategies)
		Communicate clearly and frequently academic and behavior expectations that have been developed by teachers, administrators, parents and community members.
		Hold beginning of the year parent-teacher-student conferences to set academic goals and develop learning plans to ensure student success.
		Display student academic work throughout the school and community.
		(Co-Supporter Strategies)
		Work with parents, community, business, and college and university leaders to provide motivational activities for students to raise expectations regarding future adult options.
		Organize student success teams composed of teachers, counselors, community resource people, reading specialists, parents, speech therapists, principal, to assist students who need additional help and resources to achieve success.
		Develop a comprehensive awards program that regularly recognizes achievements in all academic areas (e.g., reading, creative writing, spelling, math problem-solving and computation, science, social studies, art, music, P.E., student leadership, community service), not just "student of the month" programs.
		Organize adult education opportunities on school campus (e.g., literacy classes, English as a Second Language classes, resume writing and job search programs, etc.) which help to meet parent needs and raise expectations.
		(Co-Learner Strategies)
		Provide workshops for families on career and college opportunities which help to raise expectations.
		Organize academic performances (e.g. math fairs, readers' theatre) which allow students to demonstrate to parents what they are learning at school.
		Organize curriculum nights for parents every nine weeks and provide tips on how parents can help.
		(Co-Teacher Strategies)
		Involve parents as teachers, experts in the classroom to share their special knowledge and talents to support the curriculum.
		(Co-decision-maker strategies)
		Make how to raise expectations a topic for discussion at PTA, or school council meetings.

Activity Sheet #3c

School already does	School Should try	**Leadership**
		(Co-Communicator Strategies)
		Recognize the critical leadership role parents play in regard to their children.
		Keep parents informed of leadership opportunities on school committees and in the community.
		(Co-Supporter Strategies)
		Provide multiple opportunities for parents to be involved, especially in leadership roles which support the school.
		(Co-Learner Strategies)
		Develop parent leaders by offering leadership development workshops.
		Provide training for parent leaders and teachers in collaboration and problem-solving skills and strategies.
		Provide workshops for parents on topics determined by parents to meet their learning needs.
		(Co-decision-maker strategies)
		Establish school committees which give parents and teachers and opportunity to work together on important school issues.
		Establish a parent leadership group, such as a Parents Club, PTA, or parent-teacher organization.

School already does	School Should try	**Positive, Safe, Orderly Learning Environment**
		(Co-Communicator Strategies)
		Establish and communicate student behavioral expectations to parents regularly.
		Reward and recognize good student behavior publicly
		Provide frequent, positive feedback to parents when children are behaving appropriately.
		(Co-Supporter Strategies)
		Invite and encourage adult volunteers to organize after-school programs for students that will provide a enriched, safe learning opportunities.
		Organize campus and community clean-ups.
		Allow school facilities to be used by community service groups, especially neighborhood watch groups, boys and girls activity groups (such as boy or girl scouts, campfire).
		Help parents and community establish safe houses for children in route to and from school.
		(Co-Learner Strategies)
		Organize workshops for parents on positive parenting and discipline.
		Provide training for parent and teachers in collaboration and problem-solving skills and strategies.
		(Co-decision-maker strategies)
		Establish a school climate committee to solve discipline problem and promote a positive school climate.

Activity Sheet #3d

School already does	School Should try	**Home-School-Community Relations** *All of the activities suggested above will help to build a strong partnership. A few other activities are:*
		(Co-Communicator Strategies)
		Use a variety of communication techniques to foster two-way communication between home and school about all aspects of school life.
		Create a warm and welcoming environment that enables parents from diverse backgrounds to feel comfortable at school, e.g., welcome signs in the languages of the parents, office staff or community liaisons that speak the major languages of the parents, school newsletters translated into the primary community languages.
		Provide frequent, positive feedback to parents when children are behaving appropriately.
		(Co-Supporter Strategies)
		Establish a parent center at school where parents can meet, organize, socialize.
		Identify community resources that can assist the school and parents.
		(Co-Learner Strategies)
		(Co-decision-maker strategies)

Activity Sheet #4

Home-School Partnership Roles

1 **Home and School as Co-Communicators**
Communication serves as the foundation for all other home-school partnership activities. As communicators families and schools need to exchange information that enables both to assist children's learning. This communication needs to positive and supportive and use a variety of techniques—written, face-to-face, telephone, formal and informal meetings, through videos—that increase understanding.

2. **Home and School as Co-Supporters**
Families and schools need to support the child. Families show their support by providing food, clothing, shelter, a healthy living environment, positive encouragement and attention. Schools support families by helping families link with community resources, offering support and encouragement in times of need.

Families show support for schools through traditional activities such as fund-raising, attendance at open houses, back-to-school nights, student performances, etc. Teachers support families by inviting them and encouraging them to be an active part of the classroom and school and visiting families in their home.

3. **Home and School as Co-Learners**
Both teachers, administrators, other school staff and families need opportunities to learn about each other and how to work together to support student learning. Families need information about the school curriculum, policies, procedures, other aspects of school life, as well as about how they can help their children and enhance their parenting skills.. School staff needs opportunities to increase their effectiveness in communicating with parents (including conferencing skills), in designing effective homework and home learning activities, to utilize the skills and talents of parents to support classroom instruction, to learn about the goals and expectations of parents for their children and the attributes and strengths of the family and its culture.

4. **Home and School as Co-Teachers**
Both family and school serve as primary teachers of children. This partnership role includes the formal teaching of students at school and the ways in which parents support and encourage learning at home and in the community. Teachers and families need to work together to connect and provide mutual support for each other in ways that enhance student learning.

5. **Home and School as Co-Decision-makers, Advocates and Advisors**
This partnership roles includes participation together in formal organizations such as on PTA Board, on a School Site Council or School Advisory Committee and Booster Clubs. Teachers and parents can also be advocates for children in less formal, structured ways. The number of teachers and parents who will become involved at this level will be small, however, and those who are willing to fulfill this role need training, support and encouragement.

C-59

Activity Sheet #5

Two Case Studies of Home-School Partnership Development

St. John the Baptist School New York City	Willard Model School Norfolk, VA
Background:	**Background:**
St. John the Baptist School, which includes kindergarten through eighth grade, was established when four schools (Three K-5, and one middle, 6-8 school) were closed because of declining enrollments and financial difficulties. All four schools served children from similar low income backgrounds. The current ethnic composition of St. John the Baptist is 75% African American and 25% Hispanic. Creating a new culture from four was one of the first challenges facing the new staff at St. John the Baptist School. The goal the staff set for itself was to create a warm, welcoming and caring community which would unite students, parents and staff from the four different schools. Teachers and parents joined together to establish a shared mission.	Willard Model School serves 575, K-5 students, 60% of whom are African-American, 39% are White, and 1% of other ethnic diversities. A high concentration of low-income children and low achievement by students, made Willard one of the 12 Norfolk Public Schools selected to receive district funds to establish a parent center and hire a community liaison. The school began a concerted effort to reach out to the community. Through Chapter I and district funds, the Parent Center is staffed by the Parent Activity Leader, who is knowledgeable of the community and who works with school staff and other community agencies to increase the involvement of parents at school and in learning activities with their children at home. Through the Center, an extensive learning program for parents and teachers has been implemented to strengthen the parent-teacher partnership.
Outcomes:	**Outcomes:**
The school's outreach efforts to parents have lead to: •A positive school clime and sense of family; •Many more parents and community members volunteering at school; •Dramatic increases in the number of parents attending school events; •More parents helping their children at home; •Children performing better academically; •More graduates receiving scholarships; •Graduates of St. John the Baptist having more success in high school and college.	The schools' outreach efforts to parents have led to: •75% of parents who attended quarterly curriculum nights; •80% of parents attending at least one parent workshop; •More parents volunteering at school; •More homework being completed and returned; •More parents helping their children at home; •Improved academic achievement by students; •Parents having more opportunities to develop their own skills and knowledge.

Activity Sheet #5a

Actions to Enhance Home and School as Co-Communicators

St. John the Baptist School	Willard Model School
• School handbook given to each family with schoolwide goals and objectives as well as grade level expectations and requirements. Families review the handbook and sign an agreement that they will abide by the rules and expectations (HE and AF). • Annual calendar of school activities and events is given, with monthly updates listing meetings, report card dates, conference dates, etc. (HSR). • School newsletter distributed six times a year (HSR). • Beginning-of-the-year meeting which involves parents and teachers in small group discussions; teachers share ways parents can help at home (e.g., limiting TV time, providing a study area, checking on homework, providing homework supplies); teachers and parents exchange expectations (HE, OL/TT, HSR). • Assignment notebooks are used to provide daily communication between home and school. Parents sign assignment book after homework is completed. Friendly reminder calls from principal and teachers have been essential to increase use of assignment notebooks, sign-off by parents, and homework completion by students (FM, OL/TT, L, AF). • *Good new* notes are sent regularly, or comments are added to assignment book, or comments made on returned student work (PSLE, FM, HSR). • Telephone calls to family made by teachers and principal (FM; HSR). • Three-way conferences (parent-teacher-child) are held (principal attends if there is a need). All conferences result in action plans being developed (HE, FM, HSR, AF).	• Contact maintained with parents through notes, letters, telephone calls, home visits, conferences, and meetings, with the Parent Center Activity Leader playing an active role in facilitating communications between home and school (HSR, PSLE, OL/TT; FM, L) • Parents surveyed to determine parent workshop topics and ways parents would like to help, as well as feedback sought on usefulness of activity calendars (HSR, L). • Calendar of events provided for parents (HSR). • Curriculum review workshops held each nine weeks to help parents understand curriculum content for the quarter and to receive materials to use at home with child (OL/TT, FM, HE, AF). • Extensive system of parent-teacher conferences. Conferences are encouraged any time and are scheduled four times a year. A decision to add the two additional conferences was made by the site-based management team, with one hour before and after school and teacher prep times used for the additional conferences. The district provides pupil-free days twice a year for the two regularly scheduled conferences. During the district conference days, teachers are available from 10:00 a.m. to 7:p.m. The Parent Activity Leader is available to assist parents during conferences (OL/TT, FM, HSR, HE). • District Homework Hot Line (4 to 8 p..m.) allows students and parents to know and get help with homework assignments. As a result, rate of return on homework has increased (OL/TT, FM). • PAL Telethon is a committee of parents who call other parents to promote school activities and enhance parent-to-parent communication (HSR).

*See note at the end of Activity Sheet #5e

c-61

Activity Sheet #5b

Actions to Enhance Home and School as Co-Supporters

St. John the Baptist School	Willard Model School
• Held monthly activity meetings that bring parents, staff, and students together in ways that create a positive school climate and create a sense of community (HSR, SSE). For example: - Mother-Daughter basketball game; - Halloween party involving 100 parent volunteers; - International festival, 300 parents involved;. - Father/son basketball game with staff of local radio station; - Fashion show; - Awards/recognition ceremony. • Organized counseling and resource room (PSLE). • Parents raised funds for needed science equipment (OL/TT, HSR, PSLE). • Created many opportunities for family volunteers (each teacher agreed to recruit four parents, aunts, uncles, grandparents) to assist as door monitors, tutors, lunch room helpers, teachers' assistants, chaperones for field trips; yard duty assistants, typists; and organizers of other school and community projects (HSR, PSLE, OL/TT). • Chapter 1 parents connected with local public school to receive Chapter 1 assistance.	• Established a Parent Center, which is the heart of the Willard parent outreach model. The Center is staffed by a Parent Activity Leader/Technician paid for by district funds. The Leader oversees the operation of the parent center and serves as a critical, non-threatening link between home and school. The Center is a place parents can call their own; provides space for meetings; has a game lending library; enables parents to feel comfortable with the school before moving to assist in the classroom; helps parents learn how to support their child's learning (HSR, PSLE). • Through the work of the Parent Center Leader, parents connected with social service agencies (PSLE). Social service and community agency staff also come to the center to assist parents. • Home visits made if parents are reluctant to come to school (HSR) • The Parent Activity Leader organized a wide variety of parent workshops designed to meet parent needs (OL/TT, PSLE, HSR). • School staff provided after-school youth serving agencies with information on how to establish a homework time and space as part of after-school programs (OL/TT). • Established a game and computer home lending library to stimulate home learning activities (OL/TT, PSLE, AF).

Activity Sheet #5c

Actions to Enhance Home and School as Co-Learners

St. John the Baptist School	Willard Model School
Monthly PTA meetings have an educational focus on such topics as discipline, sex education, testing, reading at home, child abuse, communication between parent and child, dealing with adolescents (HE, OL, AF, L). • Parents given information on how they can help their children, and expectations were discussed. (HE, OL, L). • Meetings and Saturday workshops held which focus on reading and math (AF, OL/TT) • Teachers and parents meet together to discuss school issues, which has facilitated learning by both teachers and parents (PSLE, HE, AF, L). • Conferences and other communication strategies have facilitated both parent and teacher learning (PSLE, HSR, AF). • St. John's parents connected with local public school Chapter I Program to provide workshops and learning materials for home use (HE, AF, OL).	• Beginning-of-the-year workshops for teachers on parent-teacher conference skills, multicultural awareness and teacher expectations, working with parents and volunteers, and designing homework assignments (FM, HE, AF, OL/TT HSR, L). • Parent Activity Leader provided information to staff on effective strategies for working with African-American families (HSR, HE, L). • Workshops for parents offered on parent-teacher conference skills (a need identified as an outgrowth of holding more frequent conferences) (OL, HE, HSR, FM). • Curriculum workshops held every nine weeks (HE, OL, AF). • Parent workshops organized by the Parent Center in response to parent interests; for example: parent effectiveness training, study skills and homework strategies, parents as partners classes, using the newspaper, computer education classes, discipline seminars, child abuse, financial planning, mental health programs, nutrition workshops, dental health classes, stress management seminars, exercise classes Child care and transportation provided. (OL, L, AF, PSLE). • Home visits by Parent Activity Leader and teachers to share community resources, learning materials, books for a home library. Parents are shown ways to set up a study center and how to help their children. Student progress is shared and an action plan developed. Home visits have greatly expanded parent confidence and involvement with the school (PSLE, HE, OL/TT, L, AF, FM).

Activity Sheet #5d

Actions to Enhance Home and School as Co-Teachers	
St. John the Baptist School	**Willard Model School**
• Parent and community volunteers work as tutors and classroom assistants helping in a variety of academic areas, such as implementing a thinking skills program, teaching arts and crafts and foreign languages (L, OL, HE, AF). • Parents involved as teachers through daily homework monitoring (FM, OL/TT). • Parents involved as teachers through library research projects, family project worksheets, home computer loan program for math and reading improvement, home reading program, and Family Math (OL/TT, AF). • Teachers, through meetings, conferences, and materials, are teaching parents how to support their children's learning at school and at home (HE, AF).	• Parents involved as volunteers in the classroom working with students (OL, L, AF). Each teacher made a commitment to recruit at least four parent or other adult volunteers to work either in the classroom or at school. • Parents involved as teachers through daily homework assignments (OL/TT, FM). • During PAL Period parents asked to work with their children using materials specifically selected for each child to supplement classroom instruction (AF, OL/TT). • PAL Packet, home learning calendars with K-5 activities, provided to extend and reinforce school skills. Parents are asked to give feedback at the end of the month; 50% responded each month. Teachers used calendar activities during sharing time and for writing activities to reinforce what students did at home (AF, OL/TT, FM). • Summer learning packets, compiled by grade level teams throughout the year during planning times, are provided for parents and students at the end of the year. Packets include worksheets, games, writing assignments, enrichment activities, and a bibliography of books available in the public library (AF, OL/TT, HSR). • Home visits provided parents with learning activities to do with their children (HSR, AF, OL/TT). • Parents given opportunity to check out computers and games from the home-lending library (OL/TT)

Activity Sheet #5e

Actions to Enhance Home and School as Co-Advisos, Decision-Makers, and Advocates	
St. John the Baptist School	**Willard Model School**
• Established and built a strong PTA with active participation of principal, teachers and parents together on board of directors (L, HSR, PSLE). • Parents and teachers organized activities that generated a sense of community (L, SSE). • Four-week leadership development program for PTA has built considerable trust and comfortable interactions between parents and staff and has led to an active role for the PTA in the educational process (L, HE, PSLE). • PTA led community action through phone calls, petitions, and letters to get more police protection for students going to and from school (L, PSLE).	• A strong PTA exists with parents, teachers and community members serving on the Board of Directors (HSR, PSLE, L). • Parents organized and staff a student publishing center as a resource for enhancing classroom instruction (AF, L). • PTA, in cooperation with teachers, finance and organize schoolwide cultural programs for students (OL/TT, L, HSR, PSLE). • PTA and teachers organize community events such as *Pizza Night, Hot Dog Night* and *Spaghetti Night* to develop better community relations (L, HSR, PSLE). • PTA representatives attend all school board meetings and community meetings that affect the school (FM, HS). • As a site-based management school, parent representatives serve on the SBM Team which makes decisions for the school (FM, HSR, L, AF). • A parent representative serves on all school committees (HSR, L).

Note: The above actions undertaken by these schools help to illustrate the comprehensive approach used by each school staff in developing its partnership program. The activities reflect how the schools are embedding characteristics of effective schools and successful home learning environments in the home and community. The activities have been clustered under the five partnership roles (co-communicators, co-supporters, co-learners, co-teachers, and co-advocates and decision-makers). Frequently, the activities fulfill multiple roles, however, for purposes of illustration, the activity has usually been listed only once under its primary function. The effective schools characteristic that each activity addresses has been indicated in parentheses using the following abbreviations: Leadership = L; High Expectations = HE; Safe, Positive Learning Environment = PSLE= Positive, Safe Learning Environment; Home-School Relations = HSR; Opportunity to Learn and Time on Task = OL/TT; Academic Focus = AF; Frequent Monitoring = FM.

Activity Sheet #6

Case Study Reading and Discussion Guide

Co-Communicators

1. What are your reactions to what the schools have done to improve communications between home and school and create a more welcoming environment for parents? How might these changes help parents support student learning at home?

What my school has done to strengthen co-communications.

Co-Supporters

2. What are your reactions to what the schools have done to support parents? How has this support led to parent support for the school?

What my school has done to develop co-supporters and provide support for families.

Co-Learners

3. What are your reactions to what the schools have done to prove learning opportunities for parents and staff? How might these raise parent expectations, confidence and skills enabling them to better support their children's learning.

What my school has done to provide learning opportunities for parents and school staff.

Activity Sheet #6a

Case Study Reading and Discussion Guide

Co-Teachers

4. What are your reactions to the ways parents are being involved as teachers with their children at school and at home?

What my school has done to promote parents as co-teachers.

Co-Decision-makers, Advisors, Advocates

5. What opportunities do parents and teachers have to serve in the role of co-decision-maker, advisor and advocate? How do you think these opportunities have influenced the creation of a welcoming environment and parents' efforts to support student learning at school and at home?

What my school has done to strengthen the role of parents and school staff as co-advocates, decision-makers and advisors.

6. Other things I learned from reading these case studies?:

Activity Sheet #7

NEXT STEPS PLANNING SHEET

Based on what has been learned, the strengths of our school's current home-school partnership program are:

Our school currently needs to strengthen its partnership program in the following areas:

Families are currently involved in home learning/teaching activities in the following ways:

C-6F

Activity Sheet #7a

NEXT STEPS PLANNING SHEET (continued)

Based on what has been learned, the next steps to take to strengthen the school's hom schoo partnership program are:

Step / Activity	Timeline	Resources Needed

Who else needs to be involved for these steps to be effective?

What problems might be encountered in taking these next steps?

C-69

PARTICIPANT EVALUATION FORM

Building Home-School Partnerships for Learning

This has been a pilot workshop. Please help us revise it for wider use by answering the following questions.

Name of Workshop: ________________________________ Date: ____

School District: ________________________________ State: ____

Name of Your School or Organization: __________________________

1. What was the most helpful aspect of this workshop? Why?

2. What was the least helpful aspect of this workshop? Why?

3. If this workshop is presented again, what would you change and why?

I am (check one)

___ a K-3 grade teacher
___ a 4-6 grade teacher
___ a principal
___ another school site professional (specify) ________________
___ a school district staff member
___ a school district official
___ a parent
___ other (specify) ____________________

Thank you for taking part in this workshop and giving us your thoughts on it. We hope you will find it useful in building stronger partnerships with the parents of your students.

D-1

Building Home-School Partnerships for Learning:

Workshops for Urban Educators (Pilot Version)

Communication Skills and Strategies

Workshop Leader's Guide

Developed for
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
US Department of Education
by Lettie B. Cale

D-2

Communication Skills and Strategies

Overview

KEY CONCEPT

Effective communication is essential for building home-school partnerships, and serves as the foundation for building all other home-school activities.

RATIONALE AND PURPOSE

The foundation for all other forms of family involvement in education is home and school communication. Good two-way communication between families and schools is essential to support student success in school. Without good communication, it is unlikely that activities can be implemented and goals achieved in other facets of parental involvement. (Chrispeels, 1987) (See workbook for all references.)

Research over the past twenty years has shown expanding but uneven contact with parents. Parents with less than a high school education and very low incomes were most likely to have low levels of contact with teachers and schools (Moles, 1993). Families indicate, however, that they are interested in meaningful collaboration with teachers. "Studies indicate strong interest in their children's education among low-income and minority parents. Disadvantaged parents appear anxious to cooperate with teachers despite difficulties in doing so." (Moles, 1993)

The great diversity among families means that it is not possible to design a single method of communication that will reach all homes. A variety of strategies, adapted to the needs of particular families will be needed. Personal contact, including conferences, home visits, telephone calls, and curriculum nights or "open houses", seem to be the most effective forms of communication. (Liontos, 1992)

Even though educators realize that is important to communicate with families, they often feel frustrated in their efforts. Factors contributing to this frustration are:
- lack of communication skills,
- a natural tension between teachers and parents, and
- differences in perspectives. (Chrispeels, 1987)

Workshop purpose

The purpose of this workshop is to assist school staff (principals and teachers) in (1) developing the competencies needed for effective home-school communication,

(2) analyzing the type, extent, and quality of home-school communications, and (3) developing a plan to strengthen home-school communications.

AUDIENCE

This workshop is designed for teachers, administrators, and other school staff concerned about communications between schools and homes. There would be an advantage in inviting parent leaders, who may be involved in future planning activities for parent involvement. The parent leaders should be in a position to influence other parents such as members of the school advisory council, the school's restructuring committee or from the PTA board or other parent groups. Parents and teachers attending this workshop should be broadly representative of the school and community population. To facilitate participant involvement and interaction, it is recommended that the workshop be limited to 40-50 people.

Teacher educators may find this workshop useful in strengthening both pre-service and inservice education in working with families. District and school public information officers also may find the workshop helpful in obtaining parent and teacher perspectives relative to communication between them.

LEARNER OBJECTIVES

By the end of this workshop, participants will be able to:

1. Describe the conditions necessary for building trust and respect between schools and families.

2. Explain the need for effective communication between schools and families.

3. Identify obstacles to communication with families, and suggest means of overcoming those obstacles.

4. Analyze personal competencies needed for effective communication between school staff members and families.

5. Practice and model interpersonal communication skills.

6. Analyze the type, extent, and quality of communications between homes and schools that need to occur throughout the school year.

7. Make initial plans for the next steps to take in developing more effective communications between families and schools.

D-4

ESTIMATED TIME:

This workshop can be adjusted to meet several different time frames depending upon the purpose of the workshop, and the needs and interests of the participants. If the primary purpose is to create awareness and interest in the topic, then the shorter time frame will be used. For more in depth coverage, leading to planning for a change in teacher and school practice, the longer time frame should be selected.

Option 1. Short Version: For schools that have two-hour blocks of time available, portions of the first five activities can be presented, but the planning portions of Activity #6 could not be done. The amount of time spent in brainstorming, discussing in small groups, and sharing with the total group would need to be limited. The workshop also could be presented in 1 hour segments with Activities, 1,2, and 3 presented in the first hour, Activity 4 in the second hour, and Activities 5 and 6 in the third hour.

Option 2. Long Version: If three and a half or four hours are available for this workshop, all activities of the workshop could be presented. There will be more time for discussion, for analyzing home-school communications, and for developing an action plan.

Note: The portions of the Activities selected for the shorter time frame are in ( ) following the the time allowed for each activity under Option 1.

ACTIVITIES	TIME Option 1	TIME Option 2
#1 Introduction; Communication Skills Needed for Building Home-School Partnerships	20 minutes (All)	20 minutes
#2 Analyzing Personal Competencies in Communication Skills	15 minutes (1,3)	20 minutes
#3 Developing Interpersonal Communication Skills	40 minutes (2)	50 minutes
#4 School, Classroom and Staff Attitudes and Practices That Hinder Communication with Families	25 minutes (All)	25 minutes
#5 Analyzing Current Communication Practices	27 minutes (1,2,5)	47 minutes
#6 Taking the Next Steps; Conclusion	5 minutes (5)	40 minutes

Estimated length of Option 1 is 132 minutes and Option 2 is 202 minutes.

TRANSPARENCIES: Please see transparency section for list.

D-5

PARTICIPANT WORKBOOK CONTENTS: Please see workbook.

EQUIPMENT AND MATERIALS NEEDED

- Overhead projector and screen
- Easel, flip chart and marking pens
- Participant Workbooks for everyone
- 3x5 cards and pencils for everyone
- Copies of transparency 6 (see Activity #5)
- Welcome sign
- Participant name tags or name plates
- Refreshments

DEBATES AND DILEMMAS:

As teachers and other school personnel strive to improve the communication between families and schools, a number of concerns, questions and issues may arise as new strategies are implemented and former practices questioned. The workshop leader needs to be prepared for these questions, and realize that this workshop does not offer all the answers. Nor is the leader expected to have all the answers. Some of the issues addressed by the workshop activities are listed below:

1. How can trust and respect be built with parents who do not attend school functions and are hard to reach? (Activities #1, #2, #3, #4, #5)

2. How can teachers improve communications with all families? (Activity #1, #2, #4, #5)

3. How can schools and teachers communicate with all parents, including those who are hard-to-reach, and those who appear to be hostile and negative? (Activities #3, #4, #5)

4. Who should be responsible for planning and implementing various communication strategies? (Activity #6)

5. How can two-way communication, especially feedback from parents, be increased? (Activity #5)

6. Where can schools find funds to support communication activities? (Activity #5, #6)

7. How can teachers find time for personal contact with parents? (Activity #4, #5)

D-6

PREPARATION FOR THE WORKSHOP

Prior to the workshop, the Workshop Leader needs to make the following preparations:

- read the materials in this section to become familiar with the topic, as well as some of the articles in the Reference and Reading List,
- adapt the materials to their presentation style, experiences, situations, and the needs of the participants and organizations with which they are working,
- prepare transparencies from the master sheets provided, and
- arrange to get all equipment and materials noted above.

Workshop leaders should also:

- talk with principals and teachers who have developed good home-school communication strategies, and request samples of newsletters, policies, flyers, letters, memos and other items they have found effective.
- collect information relative to current communication practices used by the schools with which they willing be working. This information can be used throughout the workshop to make the presentation as relevant as possible to the audience.

Further, the Workshop Leader needs to check on room arrangements. Preferably, the participants will sit in small groups around tables to facilitate group interaction. If possible, arrange for a "workshop host" to handle site preparations, room arrangements, equipment and refreshments, however, the Workshop Leader will still need to check all preparations prior to the session.

The Workshop Leader may wish to place a flip chart near the door with the following message:

WELCOME TO COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES WORKSHOP!

1. Please make a name plate.
2. While waiting for the workshop to begin, please:
    - do the "Personal Inventory" in your Participants' Workbook,
    - get acquainted with someone new,
    - have some refreshments.
3. Thank YOU for your interest and participation.

At the close of the workshop, participants will be developing an action plan of the next steps they plan to take to further develop their communication skills and strategies with parents. Workshop Leaders are urged to make note of these plans, and to encourage participants to discuss results of their activities at future meetings.

Activity #1: Introduction; Communication skills needed for building home-school partnerships

Objective: To describe the conditions necessary for building trust and respect, and to explain the need for effective communication between families and schools.

Recommended Time: 20 minutes, short and long versions

Directions and Procedures:

1. Explain to participants that the Personal Inventory they have just completed (see workbook) covers various issues to be discussed in this workshop. It is for their use only. Suggest that they keep their responses before them during this workshop to consider where resources might be needed to help them improve communications.

2. Pass out pencils and 3 X 5 cards. As you pass them out, state that you are going to have them write something very important on the card (this raises interest and gets everyone's attention). In a calm, serious manner, ask each individual to think of a secret that they have never shared with anyone before. Be sure to allow several minutes of silence to allow the tension to build. After a few minutes of silence, ask each participant to write on the card the conditions that would be necessary if they were going to share this secret. Usually there will be an enormous sign of relief and giggles as participants realize you are not going to have them write the secret on the card.

   Then ask participants to introduce themselves to two other participants and compare their lists. Have each triad share one of their conditions and record on chart pad. Once all triads have shared and all conditions are listed, discuss how these same conditions are necessary for successful parent-teacher communications and conferences. The ideas just shared will be important themes addressed throughout the workshop (e.g., trust, respect, acceptance, positive relationships, honesty, able to keep confidences, etc.) ***Allow 10 minutes.***

3. Present the key concept, purposes and objectives for the workshop. (See pages 1, 2) Explain that there are two strands or themes for this workshop;
   a. development of personal communications competencies, and
   b. effective use of home-school communications.
   Use transparencies T-1, T-2, T-3. Allow 5 minutes.

4. Present the following information with **T-4, "Need for Communication."**

Communication has been identified by researchers as the foundation upon which family involvement activities are built. Good communication between teachers and parents is needed to:

- share information about the child's progress, needs, and interests,
- establish shared goals for the child's education,
- inform parents of what is expected in terms of student behavior and achievement,
- inform the teacher of parent expectations relative to curriculum and discipline,
- inform the parents of special classroom activities and events,
- avoid misunderstandings, and,
- help parents understand how they can reinforce school instruction at home.

State that two-way communication between teachers and parents can build good home-school partnerships if:

- the partnership is assumed to be an equal one in which both parents and educators contribute to the education of young people, and
- the partnership is based upon mutual trust and respect with educators taking the initiative to develop and nurture these key ingredients to effective collaboration.

Allow 5 minutes.

Activity #2: Analyzing personal competencies in communication skills

Objective: To analyze personal competencies needed for effective communication between schools and families.

Recommended Time: 15 minutes short, 20 minutes long version.

Directions and Procedures:

1. Present the following information on the basis for effective communication. "Effective communication is an essential starting point for building home-school partnerships. Without it the mutual support and collaboration of families and school staff cannot take place. Since partnerships imply that both parents and educators contribute to children's school progress, communication needs to flow in both directions and be based on mutual trust, respect, and understanding.

   "Effective communication is based on personal skills or competencies as well as interpersonal and organizational supports. Certain personal competencies are important for interacting with all parents, especially those parents coming from different backgrounds and cultures. The list of personal competencies on Activity Sheet #2 includes such key competencies for effective multi-cultural interaction.

   "Looking at **Activity Sheet #1, "Personal Competencies,"** people often find themselves satisfied with their skills in some areas, and dissatisfied in others. Please reflect on your own competencies and fill out this self-test as candidly as possible. This form is for your personal use as a resource and will not be turned in."

   Place transparency, **T-5, "Personal Competencies,"** on the overhead projector. Ask participants to "star" five competencies on **Activity Sheet #1** that they think are most important in communicating with families of varying backgrounds and cultures. In triads, ask participants to share their lists of most important competencies, 3 competencies of which they feel proud or satisfied, and 3 competencies that they would like to improve. Participants identify competencies that appeared on several lists. ***Allow 5/10 minutes.*** (For short version, they should star only 3 important competencies, and share 1-2 satisfied and 1-2 wanted to improve.)

2. In their triads, participants find a common situation that was not handled well that related to a competency which they would like to improve, or one member volunteers a situation. The triad members then share ideas on how it could have been better handled. ***Allow 5 minutes.***

3. Close the activity by asking participants with a show of hands to identify 4-5 competencies on which they would like additional instruction. Discuss: what

support do teachers need from principals and school districts in developing effective communications with parents? Ask participants for suggestions for resource persons and materials that could help teachers increase their competencies in communicating with parents. Check Resource Materials #A and #K. Remind participants to model these competencies as we proceed to the next activity. ***Allow 5 minutes.***

Activity #3: Developing interpersonal communication skills

Objective: To practice and model interpersonal communication skills.

Recommended Time: 50 minutes long, 40 minutes short version.

Directions and Procedures:

1. Open the activity by stating that researchers have found personal contact including conferences, telephone calls, open houses or curriculum nights, and home visits, seems to be the most effective form of communication with families. Personal contact has these advantages:
   - permits two-way flow of information,
   - provides an opportunity to correct misunderstandings
   - allows in-depth exploration of issues.

   Direct the participants to read **Activity Sheet #2, "What Research Says About Home-School Communication."** After reading Activity Sheet #2, share in triads three major findings. ***Allow 10 minutes.***

Alternate Activity:

Ask the participants to turn to ***Activity Sheet #2a, "Parent Involvement Quiz."*** As a group, have the participants guess the answer to each question, then given them the answer from the key, ***Activity Sheet #2b. Allow 10 minutes.***

Note: Skip activity 1. for the shorter version.

2. Divide the participants into four groups. **Show transparency T-5a.** Assign each group an "Activity Sheet" in the Participants Workbook to read, as follows:
   Group A: Activity Sheets #3: Parent-Teacher Conferences; Resource Materials #B-#H.
   Group B: Activity Sheets #4: Home Visits; Resource Materials #F-#H.
   Group C: Activity Sheets #5: Positive Phone Calls; Resource Materials #F-#H.
   Group D: Activity Sheets #6: Communicating through Meetings; Resource Materials #F-#J.

   Each group reviews the materials in the *Participants' Workbook* on its assigned topic, and participants share their personal experiences with the subject as well. Each group has 20 minutes to prepare a 3-4 minute presentation, such as a demonstration, skit, role play, which models a high quality example of that type of communication, covering the major points of the topic. The group also models one or more of the *Personal Competencies* (see Activity 2) as part of their presentation.
   Allow 40 minutes (20 min. preparation + 5 minutes max. x 4 group presentations.)

Note: For longer version of the workshop, ask the other teams to comment on the presentations, adding their ideas and experiences, and noting which of the Personal Competencies were modeled. To save time, have two groups give their presentations to each other.

Activity #4: School, classroom and staff attitudes, practices and strategies that hinder communication with families

Objective: To identify obstacles to communication with families and to suggest means of overcoming those obstacles.

Recommended Time: 25 minutes both versions

Direction and Procedures:

1. **Note:** Divide the participants into small groups of 4-5 people. Assign a category (school, classroom or staff) to each group. There may be more than one group in each category.

   State that there is research evidence that parents of all income levels and ethnic backgrounds desire more participation in their children's education. For example, in a survey done in seven southwestern states, 95 percent of the African-American and Hispanic parents said they should be sure their children do their homework, and they want to spend time helping them get the best education. Teachers also want more parent participation in their children's education.

   State that there are, however, school, classroom and staff attitudes, practices and strategies that hinder communication with families. Instruct the participants to list as many **attitudes, practices and strategies** that hinder home-school communication in the left hand column on **Activity Sheet #7**. Then, they should select one item from their list, and suggest ways to overcome that barrier. Direct them to list their ideas in the right hand column, "Strategies to Overcome Hindering Factors."
   Allow 15 minutes for generating ideas.

   Possible "Hindering Factors" for each heading appear below:
   School:
   - Space is unavailable for private conferences.
   - Inadequate supply of materials for sending information home to families.
   - Telephones are not made available for teachers to call parents.
   - Progress reports seldom sent home.
   - Few contacts are made with parents, and those tend to be negative.
   - No encouragement of personal (one-to-one) contacts.

   Classroom:
   - Scheduling appointments with parents who work full time during the school day.
   - Classroom climate is not welcoming to parents.
   - No adult-size chairs for parents

Staff:

- Difficulty in managing teaching responsibilities and finding time to talk with parents.
- Belief that parents are incapable of helping their children at home.
- Belief that teachers are the best authority on what is best for students.
- Focusing on the inadequacies of students.
- Use of educational jargon when talking with parents.
- Lack of understanding of the cultural background of families.
- Lack of knowledge of ways parents can help their children learn.

2. Ask reporters from several small groups to share 3-4 items in the left hand column ("Hindering Factors") from his/her list. **List on a flip chart under headings school, classroom or staff.** Ask for the strategies they thought of to overcome one of the hindering factors. **Note on flip chart by corresponding idea.**

   Provide 10 minutes for sharing ideas.

Activity #5: Analyzing current communication practices

Objective: To analyze the type, extent, and quality of communications between the home and school that need to occur throughout the school year.

Recommended Time: 27 minutes for 1, 2 and 5 below (short version); 47 minutes for entire activity (long version).

Directions and Procedures:

Note: If participants attend as a team, keep them together as a group for this activity.

1. Divide participants into work groups of 4-6 members each, and assign each group one of the categories of communication listed at the top of **Activity Sheet #8, "Communications Strategies Used in Our School(s)."** Instruct participants to select a group facilitator and recorder and to follow directions provided in **Activity Sheet #8** as they generate specific ways they communicate in their assigned category. Each recorder should write group ideas on the transparency provided by the group leader, a copy of **T-6, "Communication Strategies Used in Our School(s)."** (Workshop Leaders should use master of T-6 to make copies for each small group prior to the workshop.) ***Allow groups 10 minutes for idea generation and 1 minute for each group to report.***

2. Direct participants to **Activity Sheet #9, "Communication Checklist,"** and ask them to use the questions on this form to assess the communications strategies they have generated and previously listed on **Activity Sheet #8.** If participants worked with others from their school in the previous activity, they may continue to work as a group to complete this form. If the groups were comprised of individuals from different schools, instruct participants to work individually or with others from their school during this exercise. **Allocate 10 minutes for this work.**

Use #3 and #4 below for the longer version only.

3. Instruct groups to turn to **Activity Sheet #10, "Force Field Analysis of Communications Strategies."** For each strategy generated in the preceding activity, the groups should brainstorm strengths and possible constraints or barriers and record these as indicated on Activity Sheet #10. Tell participants to analyze as many of their strategies as time permits, using additional paper as needed. The Workshop Leader should use **T-7, "Force Field Analysis of Communication Strategies,"** as an example of how to proceed in this activity. **Allocate 10 minutes** for completion of this activity.

4. Ask participants to select one strategy analyzed on **Activity Sheet #10** which they feel they could personally improve through individual action in their classroom or school. Instruct them to identify techniques they might use to overcome each constraint, including working with others, as well as ways they might build on the indicated strengths. Have participants work individually using the space on the the back of Activity Sheet #10. **Provide 5 minutes** for individual work. Ask volunteers to share their plans if time permits.

5. Close the activity by asking participants how they might use the "Communication Checklist" in their own school(s). Hopefully, participants will suggest administering the checklist to representatives of the school community (i.e., teachers, administrators, parents) as a means of assessing current practice and planning for improvements. Refer them to Resource Materials #J-#I for additional ideas. ***Allow 2 minutes.***

Activity 6: Taking the next steps; Conclusion

Objectives: To further reflect upon the knowledge and skills educators need to effectively communicate with parents.
To develop initial plans for the next steps to developing more effective communications between families and schools.

Recommended Time: 5 minutes for item 5 (short version); 40 minutes for entire activity (long version).

Directions and Procedures:

1. Point out that to implement strategies for improving communication with parents will require planning. Note also that although home-school communication is the foundation of all other parent involvement activities, it is one component of a comprehensive home-school partnership program. ***Use T-8, "Home-School Partnership Program."*** The components are as follows:

   a. **Home and School Co-Communication:** Communication serves as the foundation for all other home-school partnership activities. As communicators, families and schools need to exchange information that enables both to assist children's learning. This communication needs to be positive and supportive and use a variety of techniques--written, face-to-face, telephone, formal and informal meetings, through videos--that increase understanding.

   b. **Home and School as Co-Supporters:** Families and schools need to support the child. Families show their support by providing food, clothing, shelter, a healthy living environment, positive encouragement and attention. Schools support families by helping families link with community resources, offering support and encouragement in times of need.

   Families show support for schools through traditional activities such as fund-raising, attendance at open houses, back-to-school nights, student performances, etc. Teachers support families by inviting them and encouraging them to be an active part of the classroom and school and visiting families in their homes.

   c. **Home and School as Co-Learners:** Both teachers, administrators, other school staff and families need opportunities to learn about each other and how to work together to support student learning. Families need information about the school curriculum, policies, procedures, and other aspects of school life, as well as about how they can help their children and enhance their parenting skills. School staff needs opportunities to increase their effectiveness in communicating with parents including conferencing skills, in designing effective homework and home learning activities, to utilize the skills and talents of parents to support classroom instruction, to learn about the goals and expectations of parents for their children and the attributes and strengths of the family and its culture.

d. **Home and School as Co-Teachers:** Both family and school serve as primary teachers of children. This partnership role includes the formal teaching of students at school and the ways in which parents support and encourage learning at home and in the community. Teachers and families need to work together to connect and provide mutual support for each other in ways that enhance student learning.

e. **Home and School as Co-Decision Makers, Advocates, Advisors:** This partnership role includes participation together in formal organizations such as on PTA Board, on a School Site council or School Advisory Committee and Booster Clubs. Teachers and parents can also be advocates for children in less formal, structured ways. The number of teachers and parents who will become involved at this level will be small, however, and those who are willing to fulfill this role need training, support and encouragement.
(Adapted from Chrispeels, Boruta, Daugherty, 1988) ***Allow 6 minutes.***

2. State that to improve home-school communications, an action plan would need to be developed. In the amount of time available in this workshop, we cannot develop a complete action plan, but we can begin the initial steps. Direct the participants to turn to **Activity Sheet #11, "Next Steps for Strengthening Home-School Communications,"** in their *Participants' Workbook* and complete **Step 1, parts a. and b.** After they look at the strengths and areas needing improvement, they should list some specific steps they will take to improve communication with parents in their school and/or classroom in **Step 2**. As far as possible, complete the "Action Steps" in **Step 2** at the bottom of the page. Urge the participants to fill in the "Who Will Do It?" and "When Will It Be Done" even if the assignments are tentative. This is important because without assigning responsibility and setting timelines, nothing will happen. Remind the participants in planning their "Action Steps" to consider having various types of activities throughout the school year. Ask if there are any questions. ***Allow 4 minutes.***

3. Have teams from each school meet together to begin the development of the next steps for improving home-school communications. ***Use Activity Sheet #11,Next Steps for Strengthening Home-School Communications." Provide 20 minutes for planning.***

4. Ask one person from each table group to briefly share their action plan. (If the group will be returning for another workshop, encourage them to bring a progress report on their action plan.) ***Allow 1 minute per table group.***

5. Conclude workshop by reviewing the key concept, purpose and objectives. Relate the objectives to each activity. Summarize with the following points:

   - Educators will be able to communicate more effectively with families if they develop personal competencies in a variety of communication skills.
   - Schools and educators need to use a variety of communication strategies throughout the year to effectively communicate with families.
   - Personal contact including conferences, telephone calls, curriculum nights or "open houses", and home visits, seems to be the most effective form of communication with families.
     Use T-9. Allow 5 minutes.

6. Close by requesting participants to complete the Participant Evaluation Form on the last page of their *Participants' Workbook*. Thank them for their participation.

7. Soon after the workshop complete the Workshop Leader's Evaluation Form. Then summarize the participants' reactions on the Leader's Summary of the Participant Evaluation Forms. Both are at the end of this guide. Send all completed forms to the project director (name and address are listed on Summary Form).

D-20

WORKSHOP LEADERS EVALUATION FORM

Building Home-School Partnerships for Learning

Leader's Name: ______________________________ Date Given: _____

Name of Workshop: ____________________ Amount of Time Used: ____

School District: ________________________________ State: _____

1. What was the most successful aspect of this workshop? Why?

2. What was the least successful? Why?

3. Did you change or cut out any parts of this workshop? If yes (a) which parts, b) what changes did you make, and (c) why did you change or cut them?

4. If this workshop is revised, what should be changed about:
    a. instructions in leader's guide
    b. workbook materials
    c. times allotted to activities

5. Other comments? Please continue on other side.

Thank you for giving us your thoughts on your experience with this workshop. May we have your phone number in case we need further information? Phone: ____________________

D-21

LEADER'S SUMMARY OF PARTICIPANT EVALUATION FORMS

Leader's Name: ______________________________

Name of Workshop: ____________________________ Date Given: _____

School(s): _________________________________ District: __________

Estimate number of participants: male _____ and female _____

Estimate number who were
_____ African American
_____ White
_____ Hispanic
_____ Asian American
_____ other (specify) _____________________________

Participants in this workshop consisted of (check all that apply):

_____ staff from a single school
_____ staff from several different schools within one school district
_____ staff from schools in several school districts
_____ school district officials and/or staff
_____ others: (specify) ______________________________________

Please summarize the last question from the Participant Evaluation Form by entering the total number of:

_____ K-3 grade teachers
_____ 4-6 grade teachers
_____ principals
_____ other school site professionals
_____ school district officials and/or staff members
_____ parents
_____ others

On a blank form please list all themes that are repeated across participants on the open-ended questions. (Read answers to one question at a time to detect common themes.) If your time does not permit this, we will summarize this information. It is more important to get all the forms back quickly.

Please send us this form, your own Leader's Evaluation Form, and all Participant Evaluation Forms. Mail to:

Oliver Moles, Project Director
Office of Research, OERI, U.S. Department of Education
555 New Jersey Ave., NW
Washington, DC 20208-5649 Phone: (202) 219-2211

D-22

Transparency Masters

Communication Skills and Strategies

Table of Contents

Transparency	Title
T-1	Key Concept
T-2	Purpose
T-3	Learner Objectives
T-4	Need for Good Communication
T-5	Personal Competencies
T-5a	Interpersonal Communication Skills
T-6	Communication Strategies Used in Our Schools
T-7	Force Field Analysis of Communication Strategies
T-8	Home-School Partnership Program
T-9	Workshop Summary

T-1

KEY CONCEPT

Effective communication is essential for building home-school partnerships, and serves as the foundation for constructing all other home-school activities.

D-24

T-2

PURPOSE

To assist school staff in:

- **developing the competencies needed for effective home-school communications,**
- **analyzing the type, extent, and quality of home-school communications, and**
- **developing plans to strengthen home-school communications.**

D-25

T-3

LEARNER OBJECTIVES

By the end of this workshop, participants will be able to:

1. **Describe conditions needed for trust and respect.**
2. **Explain need for effective communication.**
3. **Identify obstacles to communication.**
4. **Analyze personal competencies.**
5. **Practice and model interpersonal communication skills.**
6. **Analyze the type, extent, and quality of school communications.**
7. **Make initial plans for improving communication strategies.**

D-26

T-4

NEED FOR GOOD COMMUNICATION

FOUNDATION of all family involvement activities.

- **Share information about child's progress, needs, and interests.**
- **Establish shared goals for child's education.**
- **Inform parents of school's expectations.**
- **Inform teachers of parents' expectations.**
- **Inform parents of special activities and events.**
- **Avoid misunderstandings.**

- **Reinforce school instruction at home.**

T-5 *PERSONAL COMPETENCIES*

Directions:

1. Mark a Y=Yes, N=No, or S=Sometimes, by each item.

2. Put an * by the 5 competencies you think are most important in communicating with parents.

3. In triads, share:
   a. the 5 competencies you consider most important.

   b. 1 competency you feel you have.

   c. 1 competency which you would like to improve.

D-28

T-5a *Interpersonal Communication Skills*

Directions:

1. **Please read the items assigned to your group:**

Group A. Activity Sheet #3, Parent-Teacher Conferences; Resource Materials #B-#H

Group B. Activity Sheet #4, Home Visits; Resource Materials #F-#H

Group C. Activity Sheet #5, Positive Phone Calls; Resource Mat. #F-#H

Group D. Activity Sheet #6, Communicating through Meetings; Resource Materials #F-#J

2. **Share your experiences on the topic.**

3. **Help your group prepare a 3-4 minute presentation such as a demonstration, skit, role play that models a high quality example of that type of communication.**

D-29

T-6

Communication Strategies Used in Our Schools

Category: _____Beginning of the Year
_____On-Going Communications
_____Occasional Communications
_____End of the Year

T-7

Force Field Analysis of Communication Strategies

EXAMPLES

Category: On-going Communication
Type of Communication: *Newsletter*

Strengths	**Constraints**
Well-written	*Never evaluated to see if if information is what parents want.*
Distributed monthly	*Not translated into home languages.*
Interesting graphics	

Category: Beginning of the Year
Type of Communication: *Parent Handbook*

Strengths	**Constraints**
Homework policy included	*Learning objectives not shared with parents*

Home-School Partnership ← Roles Continuum →

Home & School as Co-Advisors, Advocates, Decision-Makers

As Co-Teachers

As Co-Learners

As Co-Supporters

As Co-Communicators

D-32

T-9

Workshop Summary

1. Educators will be able to communicate more effectively with families if they develop personal competency in a variety of communication skills.

2. Schools and educators need to use a variety of strategies throughout the year to effectively communicate with families.

3. Personal contact, including conferences, telephone calls, open houses or curriculum nights, and home visits, seems to be the most useful form of communication with families.

D-33

Building Home-School Partnerships for Learning: Workshops for Urban Educators (Pilot Version)

Communication Skills and Strategies

Participant Workbook

Table of Contents

Overview:

Rationale, Purpose, Objectives
Personal Inventory (please complete while waiting for workshop to begin)

Activity Sheets:

1. Personal Competencies
2. What Research Says about Home-School Communications
2A. Parent Involvement Quiz
3. Parent-Teacher Conferences
4. Home Visits
5. Positive Phone Calls
6. Communicating Through Meetings
7. Ideas for Overcoming School, Classroom, and Staff Barriers to Communicating with Parents
8. Communication Strategies Used in Our Schools
9. Communications Checklist
10. Force Field Analysis of Communication Strategies
11. Next Steps for Strengthening Home-School Communications

Resource Materials:

A. Multicultural Communication Resources
B. Invitation Letter to a Parent-Teacher Conference
C. Teacher Checklist for Parent-Teacher Conference Worksheet
D. Teacher Evaluation of Parent-Teacher Conference
E. Alternatives for Non-Attending Parents
F. Do's and Don'ts of Rapport Building with Parents
G. Do's and Don'ts of Obtaining Informtion about Parents' Perceptions and Concerns
H. Tips for Dealing with Aggression
I. Tips for Written Communication
J. Sample Early Fall Letter to Parents
K. Additional Resources on Communicating with Parents

References

Participant Evaluation Form

Communication Skills and Strategies

Overview

KEY CONCEPT

Effective communication is essential for building home-school partnerships, and serves as the foundation for building all other home-school activities.

RATIONALE AND PURPOSE

The foundation for all other forms of family involvement in education is home and school communication. Good two-way communication between families and schools is essential to support student success in school. Without good communication,it is unlikely that activities can be implemented and goals achieved in other facets of parental involvement. (Chrispeels, 1987)

Research over the past twenty years has shown expanding but uneven contact with parents. Parents with less than a high school education and very low incomes ($7,500 or less) were most likely to have low levels of contact with teachers and schools.(Moles, 1993) Families indicate, however, that they are interested in meaningful collaboration with teachers. "Studies indicate strong interest in their children's education among low-income and minority parents. Disadvantaged parents appear anxious to cooperate with teachers despite difficulties in doing so." (Moles, 1993)

The great diversity among families means that it is not possible to design a single method of communication that will reach all homes. A variety of strategies, adapted to the needs of particular families will be needed. Personal contact, including conferences, home visits, telephone calls, and curriculum nights or "open houses", seem to be the most effective forms of communication. (Liontos, 1992)

Even though educators realize that is important to communicate with families, they often feel frustrated in their efforts. Factors contributing to this frustration are:
- lack of communication skills,
- a natural tension between teachers and parents, and
- differences in perspectives. (Chrispeels, 1987)

Workshop purpose

The purpose of this workshop is to assist school staff (principals and teachers) in
(1) developing the competencies needed for effective home-school communications,
(2) analyzing the type, extent, and quality of home-school communications, and
(3) developing a plan to strengthen home-school communications.

LEARNER OBJECTIVES

By the end of this workshop, participants will be able to:

1. Describe the conditions necessary for building trust and respect between schools and families.

2. Explain the need for effective communication between schools and families.

3. Identify obstacles to communication with families, and suggest means of overcoming those obstacles.

4. Analyze personal competencies needed for effective communication between school staff members and families.

5. Practice and model interpersonal communication skills.

6. Analyze the type, extent, and quality of communication between homes and schools that need to occur throughout the school year.

7. Make initial plans for the next steps to take in developing more effective communications between families and schools.

For Your Use Only

PERSONAL INVENTORY
Assessing the Parent-Teacher Relationship

(Answer "yes" or "no". If you are not a teacher, answer in terms of most teachers in your school.)

Principle #1: Classroom Climate
_____ Are parent observers welcome in the classroom?
_____ Are there any adult-sized chairs, besides the one for the teacher?
_____ Is the classroom organized so that a parent can see what happens in it easily?
_____ Are examples of every child's work displayed regularly?
_____ Is the classroom routine written down and clearly posted?

Principle #2: Communication
_____ Are parents informed at the beginning of the year how they can reach you, the teacher?
_____ Do you tell parents about the good things, as well as the problems?
_____ Do you try to communicate at least once a month with each family?
_____ Do you talk to parents in person (or on the phone), in addition to sending written messages?
_____ Do you provide regular opportunities for parents to see their child's written work?
_____ Do you let parents know of expectations for homework, grading policies, and how parents can help?
_____ Do you let parents know what information about the child is needed to help you do a better job (e.g., family stress or major changes in family--illness, birth, death, divorce, etc.)

Principle #3: Parents as Collaborators
_____ Do you ask parents for their advice on how to deal with their children?
_____ Is there an early warning system for notifying parents if a student is falling behind and/or having social problems, so that you might confer with them about the situation?
_____ Are parents encouraged to advise you when a child is exhibiting a learning or school adjustment difficulty at home?
_____ In suggesting ways that parents can help at home, do you take into account a student's particular background and situation?
_____ Do you make it clear to parents that they must respect your need for time alone and with your family?
_____ Do you help parents understand that their child's needs must be balanced with those of the whole class?

Principle #4: Outreach to All Families
_____ Do you make a special effort to reach families from various cultures, (e.g., home visits, translators)?
_____ Are you persistent in your effort to reach parents who try to avoid coming to school?
_____ Do you meet outside regular school hours, if necessary, with parents who are employed?
_____ Will you make a home visit if that is the only way to meet a parent?

(Adapted from A.Henderson, Marburger, C.L. and Ooms,T. (1986) *Beyond the Bake Sale: An Educator's Guide to Working with Parents*. Columbia, MD: National Committee for Citizens in Education. Used with permission.)

D-37

Activity Sheet #1

Personal Competencies

The following competencies have been identified by researchers as most important for effective multicultural relationships. Each of the competencies is, to some degree, interrelated with the others, but each is important on its own as well.

Directions: Following each item, mark "Y" = "Yes" if you feel you have good skill in that competency, "N" = "No" if you feel your skills are lacking or need much improvement, and "S" = "Some" if you feel you have some skill in that competency.

_____1. **Personalizing Observations:** Being able recognize and accept that perceptions may not be shared by others; knowing and accepting that "my way is not the only way"; use "I" not "you" messages.

_____2. **Paying Attention to Your Feelings:** Being able to self-reflect on one's thoughts, feelings, and stress level in order to stay grounded in situations.

_____3. **Managing Personal Biases/Stereotypes:** Being able to treat people as individuals recognizing that everyone belongs to many groups and that no one represents a group.

_____4. **Being Non-Judgmental:** Being able to stop one's tendency to negatively judge others who are different.

_____5. **Listening Carefully:** Being able to pay close attention to what is being said both verbally and nonverbally.

_____6. **Observing Attentively:** Being able to watch and make mental notes of behavioral patterns of others in order to understand the meaning of behavior (e.g., nonverbal messages).

_____7. **Assuming Complexity:** Being able to assume and perceive a range of alternatives in situations; to recognize multiple perspective and outcomes exist.

_____8. **Tolerating Ambiguity/Uncertainty:** Being able to respond to unpredictable situations without getting stressed and cranky.

_____9. **Being Flexible:** Being able to readjust quickly and effectively to changing situations.

____10. **Having Patience:** Being able to stay calm, stable and persistent in trying situations.

____11. **Being Resourceful:** Being able to respond skillfully and promptly in new, uncertain situations. Seek information about the cultures of those with whom you interact.

Activity Sheet #1, continued.

____12. **Having a Sense of Humor:** Being able to laugh at oneself and with (not at) others; finding humor in the irony of life.

____13. **Showing Respect:** Being able to behave in respectful manner towards others who are different.

____14. **Displaying Empathy:** Being able to vicariously feel the thoughts, attitudes and experience of another. Results from respecting and interacting with diverse others.

Adapted from C. Dodd and F. Montalzo, *Intercultural Skills for Multicultural Societies*, 1987;
G. Ferraro, *The Cultural Dimension of International Business*, 1990;
P. Pederson, *A Handbook for Developing Multicultural Awareness*, 1988;
M. Sikkema and A. Niyekawa, *Design for Cross Cultural Learning*, 1987.

This "Personal Competencies List" is from the training module on personal level skills developed from the multicultural training model by Dr. Mikel Hogan Garcia, California State University, Fullerton, (704) 773-3309, c. 1990. Used with permission.

What the Research Says About the Importance of School-Home Communication

Reginald Clark and Associates

Educational research indicates that the more parents and teachers share pertinent information with each other about a student, the better equipped they will become to help that student achieve academically (Barth, 1979; Cotten and Savard, 1982; Douglas, 1970; McKinney, 1975; Smith, 1968). Parent-teacher consultation and collaboration create the climate for maximum realization of a student's potential. Specifically, appropriate communication through conferences, phone calls, workshops, school meetings, notes or newsletters, and home visits can (1) increase parents' ability to construct a healthy home learning environments for children (Yap, 1987), (2) help teachers develop better instructional strategies for use in classroom lessons, and (3) have a positive effect on student's academic achievement (Evans, 1991, Erbe, 1991). The quality and quantity of parent-teacher communication are important in affecting student achievement (Slaughter, 1986).

Parents' school participation and home involvement with a child's learning has a powerful effect on academic growth and development. In fact, the extent of parents' home involvement is much more powerful in determining a student's academic success than the family's socio-economic status (Walberg, 1984). However, the extent and quality of parents' home involvement is directly affected by the way(s) schools communicate and interact with them (Sasser, 1991). For example, school-based parent workshops can increase parent-initiated positive contacts with the school (Towns and Jones, 1979; Watkins, 1990). Also, when teachers make efforts to make parents feel comfortable in communicating with the teacher parents' attitudes toward school can improve (Stevens 1984; Duran, 1991).

Furthermore, communication strategies that ignore the ethnic-cultural backgrounds of the students or parents and/or are not designed in culturally sensitive ways may lead to parental mistrust and withdrawal (Harry, 1992; Delgado-Gaitan, 1990). Parents want to learn how to help their children in school (Morton-Williams, 1970; Stevens 1984; Barth 1979; Douglas, 1970; Epstein, 1984; Peach and Reddick, 1987). They also want information on health care and child-rearing issues (General Mills, 1977; Towns and Jones 1979; Cassidy, 1988). A review of research shows that direct parent instruction of their own children at home positively effects school achievement (Cotten and Savard, 1982). But, parents need specific information on how to help and what to do (Morton-Williams, 1970; Green, 1984).

Teachers, too, can reap positive benefits from home-school communication. In national surveys, teachers note the positive value that effective parent-teacher communication can have on a child's school performance (Harris, 1987; 1991). In other studies, teachers have seen that positive written and verbal communication with parents can lead to improved student reading achievement (Epstein, 1984; Smith 1968; Slade, 1988), or can have a positive impact on students' self concept (Cotten and Savard, 1982),

D-41

and can reduce the incidence of student's disruptive classroom behavior (Safran, 1979; Barth, 1979). Researchers have emphasized the need for teachers to learn more about the ethnic groups represented in their classrooms in order to develop positive attitudes toward parents and students from those groups (Lightfoot, 1978). In short, effective communication can improve both teacher-student relations and teacher-parent relations (Safran, 1979; Sterns, 1973; Melnick and Fiene, 1990).

There are a variety of effective strategies for communication. **Parent-teacher conferences** are a common type of home-school communication. At conferences, parents can be given information and materials to help their child at home. Some studies cite conferences as one of the main communication tools available to teachers (Barth, 1979; Iverson, et al, 1981).

Telephone conversations between teacher and parent are another commonly used way to open the channels of communication (Iverson, et al, 1981; Smith, 1968). Also, some research shows that **home visits** by teachers can lead to improvements in student achievement (Gordon, 1979).

Workshops to train parents to help their children are another form of communication that can help improve students' test scores, attitudes, attendance, and self-concept (McKinney, 1975; Smith, 1968; Siders and Sledjeski, 1978; Gillum, 1977; Watkins, 1990; Evans et al, 1991). Specific training of parents for **home teaching of reading** is an effective way to encourage and increase children's involvement in mentally stimulating activities at home as well as at school (Bloom, 1984; Gillum et al, 1977; Henderson, 1981; Morton-Williams, 1970; Siders and Sledjeski, 1978; Smith, 1968; Towns and Jones, 1979; Epstein, 1984). Through workshop-based communication, parents can gain more confidence in contacting the school for help and advice (Towns and Jones, 1979; Watkins, 1990) and can improve their parenting skills (Sterns et al, 1973).

Open House discussions and **Curriculum Nights** are other methods of creating a beginning contact with parents. Written communication is a good follow-up to contacts between parents and teachers in these settings (Iverson et al, 1981; Barth, 1979).

Effective communication starts with a well-thought-out plan, and a good **plan of communication** starts with the school administration (Davies et al, 1992; Peach and Reddick, 1987). A well designed communication plan can result in parents improving their parenting skills (Sterns et al, 1973). The components of a comprehensive plan include (1) assessing the structures that may support or impede teacher-parent communication, (2) planning activities and strategies for communicating with (and recruiting) parents and encouraging their participation in information-sharing communications, (3) providing parent training activities, (4) linking parents and families to services that may affect their ability to communicate with school personnel, (5) establishing powerful roles for parents on advisory committees, (6) developing/providing materials for parents to use to help them make the best decisions, (7) providing professional development opportunities for teachers and staff, and (8) conducting ongoing assessments and summative evaluations of communication activities (Clark, 1991).

D-41

References

Barth, Richard. "Home-based Reinforcement of School Behavior: A Review and Analysis." Review of Educational Research 49, no.3 (1979):436-458.

Bloom Benjamin. "The Search for Methods of Group Instruction as Effective as One-to-One Tutoring." Educational Leadership 41, no. 8 (May1984): 4-17.

Cassidy, Eileen. "Reaching and Involving Black Parents of Handicapped Children in Their Child's Education Program." Final Report, Minority Outreach Project: Lansing Michagan: Cause Inc., 1988.

Clark, Reginald. "The Role of Parents in Ensuring Education Success in School Restructuring Efforts" In Council of Chief States School Officers, ed., Restructuring Schools: Potential for Students at Risk, Washington, D.C., 1991.

Cotten, Kathleen and William G. Savard. Parent Involvement in Instruction K-12: Research Synthesis. 1982.

Davies, Don, Patricia and Vivian Johnson. "A Portrait of Schools Reaching Out: Report of a Survey on Practices and Policies of Family-Community-School Collaboration" Center on Families, Communities, Schools and Children's Learning, Report No. 1, 1992.

Delgado-Gaitan, Concha. "Involving Parents in the Schools: A Process of Empowerment." Paper presented at the University of California Symposium on Race, Ethnicity, and Schooling; Davis, CA., 1990.

Douglas, J. W. B.. "Parental Encouragement" in Maurice Craft (ed). Family Class and Education: A Reader. Harlow, England: Longmann, 1970.

Duran, Manuel, Jr.. "Increasing Parental Involvement in a Chapter I Reading Program." M.S. Practicum: Nova University, 1991.

Epstein, Joyce L.. "Effects of Teacher Practices of Parent Involvement: Change in Student Achievement in Reading and Math". Paper presented at American Educational Research Association, 1984.

Erbe, Brigitte. "Parent Participation in the Chicago Public Schools." Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association, Chicago, Illinois, 1991.

D-42

Evans, Ian M. et al."Experimental Evaluation of a Preventative Home-School Partnership Program for At-Risk Elementary-Aged Children." Paper Presented at the Biennial Meeting of the Society for Research in Child Development, Seattle, WA, 1991.

General Mills. American Family Report, 1975-1977. Raising Children in a Changing Society. Minneapolis, Minnesota. 1977. p. 42.

Gillum et al. "The Effects of Parental Involvement on Student Achievement." Paper presented at American Educational Research Association, 1977.

Gordon, Ira. "Effects of Parent Involvement on Schooling" in Partners: Parents and Schools, Alexandria, VA., (1979): ASCD Pp. 4-25.

Green, Connie. "Parent Involvement in the Composing Process of Kindergarten Children.": University of Florida, 1984.

Harris, Louis, et al. The American Teacher 1987: Strengthening Links Between Home and School. Conducted for Metropolitan Life Insurance Company. New York: Louis Harris and Associates, Inc., 1987.

Harris, Louis, et al. The American Teacher 1991: The FIrst Year: New Teachers' Expectations and Ideals. Conducted for Metropolitan Life Insurance Company. New York: Louis Harris and Associates, Inc., 1991

Harry, Beth. "An Ethnographic Study of Cross-Cultural Communication With Puerto Rican-American Families in the Special Education System." American Educational Research Journal (1992) 29(3): 471-494.

Henderson, Anne (editor). The Evidence Continues to Grow: Parent Involvement Improves Student Achievement. Columbus, Ohio: National Committee for Citizens in Education, 1988.

Iverson, Barbara K. et al. "Parent-Teacher Contacts and Student Learning" Journal of Educational Research (1981) 74:394-396.

Lightfoot, Sarah L.. Worlds Apart. New York: Basic Books, 1978.

McKinney, J.A.. "The Development and Implementation of a Tutorial Program for Parents to Improve the Reading and Mathematics Achievement of Their Children." Doctoral Practicum, Nova University, (1975): ED113 703.

Melnick, Steven A. and Richard Fiene. "Assessing Parents' Attitudes Toward School Effectiveness." Paper Presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association: Boston, MA., 1990.

D-43

Morton-Williams, Roma. "The Survey of Parental Attitudes and Circumstances, 1964." In Craft, Maurice, ed., *Family, Class and Education*. London: Longmann, 1970.

Peach, Larry E. and Thomas J. Reddick. "A Study to Determine Parents' and Teachers' Perceptions of the Effectiveness of Public School Principals in the Upper Cumberland Development District of Tennessee." Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Mid-South Educational Research Association: Mobile, AL., 1987.

Safran, Daniel. "Parent Involvement and Parents' Rights: A Study of Parental Attitudes." Ph.D. diss., University of California, Berkeley, 1979.

Sasser, Kristy. "Parental Involvement in Schools: Reluctant Participants Do Not Equal Uninterested Parents." Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Mid-South Educational Research Association, Lexington, KY., 1991.

Siders, Mary B. and Stephen Sledjeski. "How to Grow a Happy Reader: Report on a Study of Parental Involvement as it Relates to a Child's Attitudes and Achievement in the Acquisition of Reading Skills." P.K. Yonge Lab School, Gainesville, FL., 1978.

Slade, Kenneth. "Parents as Active Members in the School's Reading Program." Paper presented at the Annual Rupertsland Regional Conference of the International Reading Association, Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada, 1988.

Slaughter, Diane T. et al. "Children's Peer Acceptance and Parental Involvement in Desegregated Private Elementary Schools." Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association, San Francisco, CA, 1986.

Smith, Mildred Beatty. "School and Home: Focus on Achievement." in A.H. Passow, ed, *Developing Programs for the Educationally Disadvantaged*. New York: Teachers College Press, (1968): 87-107.

Sterns, Miriam, et al. "Parent Involvement in Compensatory education Program: Definition and Finding." Menlo Park: Stanford Research Institute, (1973): ED088 588.

Stevens, Joseph. "Social Integration, Social Support and Parenting Among Black and White Mothers." Paper presented at American Educational Research Association, 1984.

Towns, Kathryn, and Bruce Jones. "The Ignored, Untrained Teachers: Parents." Paper presented at American Educational Research Association, 1979.

Walberg, Herbert. "Improving the Productivity of America's Schools." *Educational Leadership.* (1984) 41(8): 19-27.

Watkins, Christine. "A Program to Modify a Black Community's Perception of the Community's Role in School Activities." Education Specialist Practicum: Nova University, 1990.

Yap, Kim Onn. "Improving Chapter 1 Through Parents: A Family Goal Program." Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association, Washington D.C., 1987.

5

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Activity Sheet #2A (Alternate) **Parent Involvement Quiz**

1. What is the percentage of parents who say they are reluctant to talk with school officials? _____%
   What is the percentage of teachers who say they are reluctant to talk with parents? _____%

2. What are the two most common reasons parents give for not being involved with their children's education?
   ____
   ____

3. What is one common key to success in reaching diverse parent groups?
   ____

4. Even when a school or school district is facing serious problems, how can an organized parent involvement program be helpful?
   ____
   ____

5. Aside from having parents involved in school fund-raising and other "traditional" parent activities, what are some ways parents can be most effectively involved in educational activities at school?
   ____
   ____

6. What are the most important ages and grade levels for parents to be involved in their children's education?
   ____

7. Of all the types of partnerships, what do *most* parents say they need the most help with from the schools to remain informed and involved in their children's education?
   ____

8. Early childhood experts and research findings agree that the most critical years for learning begin when? Age _____? And when do the experts believe that lifelong patterns for failure or success are set? Between the ages of ____ and ____?

9. We know that language ability is the single most important skill for good school achievement and for lifelong success. We also know that parent involvement is critical in the early years prior to formal schooling. Studies show that a child understands more than half of everything he will use in conversation for his entire lifetime by what age? Age _____

10. Within 10 percentage points, what percent of recent research studies indicate that parents have an important impact on children's school achievement? _____%

Activity Sheet #2A, continued.

How Did You Score?

Give yourself 10 points for each question answered correctly--five points for each correct answer on two-part questions.

1. **Reluctance to contact one another:** According to the *Metropolitan Life Survey of the American Teachers*, 1987, 19% of parents said they feel awkward or reluctant to talk with school officials while 55% of teachers said they feel uneasy or reluctant to approach parents to talk about their child.

2. **Why parents say they are not involved.** Studies show that parents often say they are not involved (1) because they do not have time, and (2) they do not know what to do. some research indicates that parents will make time to help their children if they are shown what they can do. Strategies to help parents better use the time they do have are needed.

3. **Success in reaching diverse parent groups:** Experienced educators say the key to success in reaching diverse parent groups is to schedule programs and activities flexibly to accommodate different cultural norms, parents' interests, and skills, as well as today's variety of family living styles.

4. **School problems and parent involvement:** Organized involvement, particularly parent meetings, can help even when schools are experiencing problems. Parent groups can serve as a forum for discussion, a means of mobilizing support and a conduit for change.

5. **Effective ways to involve parents:** Experienced educators say parents can be very effectively involved in educational activities at school as volunteer tutors, classroom aides, and invited speakers. Way parents can help their children at home should also be stressed since much of every child's education takes place away from the school.

6. **Best ages, grades for parent involvement:** Experts say it is important for parents to be involved in their children's education at all ages and grade levels.

7. **What parents say they want help with from schools:** Surveys show that most parents want more information on how to help their own child at home each school year. This includes how to monitor homework, discuss school work, and interact to encourage good work in all subjects.

8. **Start of most critical learning years:** While it is essential that schools and parents work together, experts and research studies agree that the critical years for learning begin long before the child reaches school--at birth. and the experts believe that lifelong patterns for failure or success are set between the ages of three and eight. These finds point up the critical need for parents to be involved in the education of their children well before they start school. Then the stage is set for vital parent involvement throughout the school years as well.

Activity Sheet #2A, continued.

9. **Age by which most language ability is set:** Studies indicate that a child understands as much as 70 percent of everything he will use in conversation for his entire lifetime by age three.

10. **Percent of research studies supporting parent involvement:** Nearly one-hundred percent of studies indicate that parents have an important impact on their children's school achievement.

Ninety to 100 point is excellent. Seventy-five to 85 is good. Sixty to 70 is just average. If you scored below 60, you may be overlooking the tremendous resource of parent involvement in helping all children achieve and in meeting the newly established national goals for education.

Help is Available

For a free brochure: **"Developing Family/School Partnerships: Guidelines for Schools and School Districts,"** other information about NCPIE and additional parent involvement resources, send a stamped (45 cents), self-addressed, #10 (legal-sized) envelope to the National Coalition for Parent Involvement in Education, Box 39, 1201 Sixteenth Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036.

Note: The Parent Involvement Quiz is not copyrighted and may be reproduced as desired by readers to help increase the awareness of parents and educators about the importance of parent involvement in our schools. It was developed by the National Coalition for Parent Involvement in Education.

(NCPIE, 1990)

Activity Sheet #3

Parent-Teacher Conferences

Step One: Preparing for the Conference

1. **Have a procedure for documenting each child's academic progress and behavior.**
   a. Prepare a file folder, file box or notebook for each child.
   b. Include both academic progress and behavioral records. Examples of student's work, test results, anecdotal records, attendance and health records, responses to questionnaires, parent notes and questions should be included.
2. **Contact the parent(s) to arrange the conference.**
   a. Make arrangements by telephone or letter. Explain the purpose, place, time, length of the conference and the child care provisions. There is less opportunity for confusion relative to date and time if arrangements are confirmed by letter.
   b. Include in the letter a list of preparatory questions or planning sheet to help parents prepare for the conference. This will help to identify parent concerns.
   c. Hold conferences at times when parents can attend without too much inconvenience. Conferences may be scheduled before school (or the parent's job) starts, in the evening or on Saturdays. When possible, coordinate conference times if there are siblings in the school.
   d. Arrange for translators if necessary.
3. **Arrange a place for the conference.**
   a. Hold the conference in a place where you can have a private, uninterrupted conversation with the parents.
   b. Seat the parents and teacher on the same level, preferably away from the teacher's desk. Arrange for adult size chairs, around a table, if possible. Have the room freshly ventilated and well lit.
   c. Arrange for a comfortable place where parents can wait. Give them a folder of their child's work to examine or ask them to fill out a questionnaire about their concerns.
4. **Think through your objectives for the conference.**
   a. What do you want to accomplish? What do you need to communicate? Write down the areas or topics you plan to cover.
   b. What steps can you follow during the conference to assure that your objectives are met? What information do you want from the parents? What points will you make? What suggestions will you offer?
   c. What materials will you share with the parents? Are they organized to complement your conference plan?
   d. How will you end the conference? What specific steps will you recommend? How can the parents work with you to improve their child's education?
5. **Prepare the students by talking about the purposes of the conference.**
   a. Help the students to understand the purpose of the conference is to help them.
   b. Ask them to complete a simple questionnaire about themselves.
   c. Enlist the students' in decorating the room with displays of their work, and making it a welcoming place for parents.

Activity Sheet #3, continued

Step Two: Conducting a Progress Report Conference

Note:
Prior to the conferences, place adult-sized chairs outside the classroom door and post a list of the scheduled conferences. Give waiting parents a folder of their child's work to review. It will make waiting easier, and gives them a chance to prepare for the appointment. Keep appointments on schedule.

1. **Welcome and establish rapport with the parent as an adult.**
   a. Begin the conference with some general conversation by asking about the parent's work, hobbies, interests.
   b. State the purpose and time available for the conference. Encourage note-taking and discuss opportunities for a follow-up meeting.
2. **Discuss the student's positive attributes.**
   a. Be as specific as possible in describing the student's strengths, assets, and positive accomplishments; give examples.
   b. Ask parents to describe what they see as the child's strengths.
3. **Describe the child's progress focusing on what has been learned in each subject since school started.** Note: Teachers at various grade levels tend to emphasize different aspects. For example, the kindergarten teacher emphasizes exploration. The primary grade teacher stresses development of basic skills (reading, math), and the upper grade teacher accents great awaremess of personal development of personal strengths and interests.
   a. Be as precise as possible in terms you are sure the parent will understand. Show examples.
   b. Ask parents how they feel about their child's progress. Listen for expectations and frustration. If necessary, paraphrase the concerns so that mutual understanding is insured.
4. **Discuss areas that need improvement.**
   a. Begin by asking parents what area they feel they would most like to see their child strengthen.
   b. Describe, in specific terms, areas in need of improvement, and what the teacher is doing to address the problem.
   c. Ask for parent concerns and suggestions.
5. **Identify one area to work on for growth or improvement and develop a plan of action.**
   a. Choose one thing that concerns both you and the parent. Be sure it is one with which the parent can help. Ask the parents for ideas on ways they could help.
   b. Give specific suggestions, if the parents are not sure what to do.
   c. List actions that have a high probability of success, then choose one or two for the parent to try. Write them on the *Student-Parent-Teacher Worksheet*. (See sample, page 37.)
   d. State what you will be doing in the classroom to help the child.
   e. Establish a timeline with parents for these actions.
   f. Discuss with the parent some kind of reward for the child for improvement in the selected area.

Activity Sheet #3, continued.

Step Two: Conducting a Progress Report Conference, continued.

6. **Conclude the conference on a positive note.**
   a. Summarize what the parent and you will be doing to help the child.
   b. Indicate how and when you will follow-up; thank parent for coming.

Step Three: Following-up After the Conference

1. **Document the conference for future reference.**
   a. Have a simple form to record the important points. This may be a copy of the worksheet completed during the conference.
2. **Evaluate the conference.**
   a. Ask the parents to complete an overall conference evaluation form immediately after the conference. *(See page 40 for a sample evaluation form.)*
   b. Evaluate the conference yourself by assessing if your objectives were accomplished, if rapport was established with the parent, and how the conference might have been improved.
3. **Both the parent and you should review the conference with the child, as appropriate.**
   a. Explain the plans the parent and you made to help the child be successful.
4. **Share information with other school personnel, as needed.**
5. **Follow-up with a phone call, letter or note to express appreciation and to report progress within a few days.**
   a. Send a copy of the plans made during the conference to the parent which may encourage the parent to follow through on his/her commitment.
   b. Make adjustments, if needed, in the actions planned.

(Adapted from Chrispeels, 1990; Cale, 1992.)

Elements Necessary for a Successful Conference

- **Cooperative Spirit**--Parents and teachers leave with a positive attitude toward each other and a willingness to continue working cooperatively together. Not all issues necessarily resolved but there is a willingness to continue the dialogue.

- **Enhanced Trust**--There is an increase in the level of trust between parents and teachers and neither is trying to control the behavior of the other.

- **Greater Mutual Knowledge**-Parents and teachers know more about the child than they did before the conference.

- **Better Understanding**-Parents and teachers leave the conference with a better understanding of each other's goals expectations and what each is trying to do to support the child's learning.

- **Plan of Action**--Parents and teachers leave the conference with a plan of action to help the child be successful. (Chrispeels, 1990)

D-50

Activity Sheet #3, continued.

Parent-Teacher Conference

Student-Parent-Teacher Worksheet

Teacher's Name: ____________________ **Phone:**____________

Student's Name:______________________ **Phone:**___________

Parent's Name(s)_____________________ **Phone:**___________

Subject or behavior needing improvement:

Why?

What the Student will do:

What the Parent will do:

What the Teacher will do:

How we will measure improvement:

Comments:

Activity #3, continued.

Evaluating the Conference

Parents and teachers should evaluate the conference to obtain insights into the attitudes of both parties, to identify any problems that may have occurred, and to assess how the conference might be improved. The evaluation may be a simple three part questionnaire asking:

1. Did the conference accomplish what you had hoped?
2. What was the most helpful part of the conference?
3. How could the conference have been improved?

A more detailed evaluation form appears below:

Parent Evaluation of a Parent-Teacher Conference

Dear Parent,

In order to determine how much information you received and how useful the conference was, we need some written feedback from you. Please check the response that indicates your feeling about each item. It is not necessary for you to sign the feed-back form. After completing the form, please leave it with the principal. Thank you.

	Yes	**No**	**No Response**
1. I was allowed to discuss the items which concern me most about my child.			
2. My questions were answered to my satisfaction.			
3. I felt at ease during the conference.			
4. The teacher(s) was/were courteous and treated me with respect.			
5. I developed a plan with the teacher of things I can do to maintain or improve my child's education.			
6. I think the plan is something that I can easily use with my child.			
7. I feel more positive about my child and his/her education.			
8. The conference was a positive experience.			
9. I plan to come to school again on the next conference day.			
10.Comments:			

(Operation Fail-Safe, 1979)

Activity Sheet #4

Home Visits

Home visits are a unique opportunity for real two-way communication between home and school. They acquaint the home visitor with a child's family and culture, and provide a familiar setting for listening to parents' concerns and for recognizing their contributions to the home-school partnership. Home visits may be the only way of communicating with hard-to-reach parents who are reluctant to come to school meetings, who do not have a telephone, or who cannot read written material sent from the school.

Home visits can serve a variety of goals. They can be used to:

- introduce parents and teachers to each other,
- welcome new families to the school community,
- demonstrate home learning activities to parents.
- report on student progress in school,
- solve specific problems, and,
- survey parents for their views on school policies and programs.

Benefits of Home Visits:

The student can:

1. Have the opportunity of welcoming the teacher into the home and of watching how the teacher reacts to it.
2. Show the teacher new aspects of him/herself.
3. Illustrate problems and situations that he/she may find difficult to articulate.
4. Profit from the relationship that the teacher establishes and maintains with the parent(s).

The parent can:

1. Meet, on a more relaxed basis, the teachers with whom the student spends an important portion of his/her day.
2. Have the opportunity to ask questions of a professional educator.
3. Communicate from the security and comfort of the home.
4. Illustrate problems or frustrations that require direct observation.
5. Ask how to help the student at home, knowing that the teacher can see the home in which the proposed assistance would take place.

The teacher can:

1. Obtain support from parent(s) that will reinforce the teacher's efforts.
2. Gain insights into the parent-child relationship that influences the student.
3. Obtain specific information about the student that is of value in providing motivation.
4. Observe situations that might foretell potential changes or account for changes that have already taken place in the student's behavior.
5. Provide information and support to parent(s) regarding the student.
6. Learn how he/she is perceived by the student and the parent(s) of the student.
7. Observe the degree of social order or disorder in the home that influences student behavior.

Activity Sheet #4, continued.

The school can:

1. Signify the willingness of the school to "go more than halfway" to involve parents in their children's education.
2. Give parents a clear message that the school is caring and concerned about communication with parents.
3. Increase the level of trust between the school and its parents.
4. Increase the willingness of the parents to come to the school.

(Adapted from Decker and Decker, 1986; Office of Community Development, n.d.)

School administrators can facilitate home visits by:

- setting the example of visiting one home per month themselves,
- encouraging teachers to make one home visit a semester,
- arranging time for teachers to plan and carry out home visits,
- providing substitutes or dismissing classes early to provide home visit time,
- providing mileage reimbursement,
- offering escorts and translators to teacher willing to make home visits,
- allocating resources to hire community aides to conduct home visits.

Home visits can be conducted by teachers, community aides, or trained volunteers (parents and community members). The home visitor should be sensitive to cultural differences and always set a tone of mutual respect and consideration. If parents refuse a home visit, their wishes should be respected. Reluctant parents may be more receptive to a home visit if the visitor is accompanied by a familiar third party, such as friend of the family, a neighbor, or a respected clergyman. Home visits may also be held in housing project meeting rooms, church recreation halls, or community meeting rooms.
(Chrispeels, Boruta, and Daugherty, 1988)

Preparing for the Home Visit

The commitment of the entire school staff is needed for home visits to be successful. Administrators and teachers must be involved in planning the program and must agree to participate. Home visits are more likely to be successful when:

- Teachers' schedules are adjusted so that they have the necessary time.
- Home visits are scheduled in a selected month of the year and not stretched out through the entire school year.
- Visits are logged and documented so that teachers and administrators can measure the scope and effectiveness of the program.
- Every home that requests a home visit is honored with one.

1. **Schedule a time for the visit.** There is no "best" time to visit. Some schools have scheduled home visits in the afternoon immediately after school dismissal. With so many employed parents, early evenings or weekends may be preferred. Teachers of siblings may

D-54

collaborate to schedule concurrently their visits to these children's home.

2. **Contact parents, establish rapport.** Explain that you want an opportunity to get acquainted with the child's parents so that you can work together to help the child learn even more. Emphasize that the purpose of the visit is to introduce the teacher and family members to each other, and not to discuss the child's progress. Set up an appointment time when parents can talk for 15-30 minutes, uninterrupted. Be clear about where the meeting will happen, how to get there, whether an interpreter is needed.

3. **If the parents are literate in English, a letter may be sent to them explaining the desire to have teachers make informal visits to all students' home.** This letter should include a form that parents can mail back which allows them to graciously decline/accept this opportunity. The letter should state clearly that the intent of this 15-30 minutes visit is to introduce the teacher and family members to each other. This visit is not a substitute for a parent-teacher conference and is not to discuss the child's progress. The tone of the letter should be friendly and informal.

4. **Suggest to parents that the child plan ahead of time what special things he/she wants to share with the teacher.** This may be pets, favorite toys and games, hobbies, projects, favorite books or places in the home.

5. **Prepare a list of questions designed to involve the parent in a discussion of the child's social, emotional and educational development.** For example:
   - *What are your child's interests?*
   - *Can your child read and does he/she enjoy reading or being read to?*
   - *How do you think the youngster feels about school?*
   - *Does he/she show curiosity by asking a lot of questions?*
   - *Does your child have specific responsibilities at home?*
   - *What does your child do in his/her spare time?*
   - *Have you noticed if the child seems to have any learning problems?*
   - *Do you have any concerns or anything you would like to ask us?*

6. **Prior to the visit, think through the following questions:**
   a. Am I going to the home with an open mind?
   b. Am I willing to learn from the parent?
   c. Do I believe the parent(s) has/have anything of value to teach or share with me?
   d. Are my attitudes conducive to creating a positive, on-going relationship with the parents?

7. **Arrange for a translator if the school visitors do not speak the parents' languages.**

(Adapted from Chrispeels, Boruta, & Daughtery, 1988; Decker and Decker, 1986; Faison, 1984; Office of Community Development, n.d.)

Activity Sheet #4, continued.

During the Home Visit

1. **Establish rapport with the parent through a warm, friendly greeting.** Talk in a relaxed manner about general topics, express interest in the child's activities at home, reinforce parent with encouraging comments. Talk with the child and the parent about the things they show you such as pets, hobbies, toys, etc.

2. **Make it clear to the parent that you are concerned about the child's success.** Ask the parent for their observations and/or concerns about the child. (See questions under 5. on the preceding page.) Ask if the parent has any questions. Discuss possible help for the parent with his/her concerns. Invite the parent to upcoming school events such as open house, parent-teacher conferences,etc.

3. **Close the visit by thanking the parent for his/her time and hospitality.** If appropriate, set date and time for another meeting.
   (Adapted from Chrispeels, Boruta, and Daugherty, 1988)

After the Home Visit

Following the home visitation, the school staff should:
1. Record important details.
2. Follow through on some specific activity or arrangement.
3. Send a personal message so that the parent(s) will know that the follow-through action has been taken, if needed.
4. Follow-up with the student, if necessary.
5. Make an evaluation of the visit.

(Adapted from Decker and Decker, 1986; Office of Community Development, n.d.)

Activity Sheet #5

Positive Phone Calls

Imagine how you would feel as a parent if you were contacted by a teacher or the school principal and told that your son or daughter is doing well in school...that the child has overcome a learning or behavior problem that he or she had been experiencing. Be prepared for a response indicating shock or surprise. Parents are not accustomed to hearing good things about their children over the telephone.

Home-school communication is greatly increased through personalized positive telephone contact between teachers and parents. When a telephone call from school carries information that is positive, the atmosphere between the home and school is improved.

Strong support from school administrators, who must provide teachers with the time and resources they will need, is required to implement a positive phone program. Teachers should be involved in the planning of these programs to ensure their commitment to making them effective.

In order to ensure success with a positive phone program, schools must be willing to:

1. **Provide adequate access to telephones.** The program will not succeed unless teachers have a private and comfortable place from which to make their calls. Schools may need, therefore, to install additional telephone lines in teacher workrooms, or provide incentives for teachers to call in the evenings when more parents are at home.

2. **Make time available to the staff to make the calls.** Designate certain months of the year for making positive telephone calls during which time can be made available in the daily schedule, or during class preparation time for teachers to take on this extra responsibility.

3. **Develop, with teachers, a set of guidelines for making telephone calls.** These guidelines could outline several purposes for making telephone calls to parents, as follows:
   - Introducing the teacher to the parent
   - Telling the parent about the students are studying
   - Inviting the parents to open houses, conferences, and other school functions
   - Commenting on a child's progress
   - Informing the parent of a particular achievement of the child, such as having been selected "Student of the Week"
   - Informing the parent of particular strengths of the child and sharing an anecdote that involves the child.

4. **Provide translation services for parents, as needed.**

5. **Provide a reporting system.** Teachers should maintain log books or calling cards so that the school has a record of positive phone calls. In this way, teachers and administrators can have a clearer sense of the scope and effectiveness of their efforts on a school wide basis. (Adapted from Office of Community Development,n.d.; Roberts, n.d.)

Activity Sheet #5, continued.

Script Outline for Get Acquainted Telephone Call

Teacher:

"I am ------ ------, Kathy's fourth grade teacher. I am calling all of my student's parents to get acquainted with them early in the school year. I am looking forward to working with Kathy and you during this school year.

"Recently I sent a letter telling you how I will let you know about Kathy's progress, and what is expected in terms of homework. Did you get the letter? Do you have any questions, or is there anything I could clarify for you?"

Parent:

"Well, is Kathy in any trouble? Is she doing all right?"

Teacher:

"Yes, Kathy is doing fine at this time. As the school year progresses, and I have more time to work with her I will be able to be more specific on her strengths and the areas in which she needs to improve. Do you recall getting the letter?"

Parent:

"Oh, yes, Kathy brought it home yesterday."

Teacher:

"Do you have any questions? Or, is there anything I can clarify for you?"

Parent:

"Yes, Kathy isn't always certain what the homework assignment is, or what she should do. Is there some way you could help her with that?"

Teacher:

"One thing that might help is if Kathy would write down the assignment in a small notebook or on a special page in her notebook. I always write the assignments on the board so the students can copy it down. You might wish to remind her to be sure to write the down the assignments, and I will do the same. Any other questions?"

Parent:

"No, that's all I can think of right now."

Teacher:

"I am looking forward to meeting you and discussing some things that you can do at home to help Kathy get the most out of her education experiences. You will be receiving some information about this."

Activity Sheet #5, continued.

Parent:
"That would be helpful. I look forward to receiving it."

Teacher:
"I hope you will be able to visit the school and Kathy's classroom soon. Perhaps you could join her for lunch in the school cafeteria, and then spend some time in her classroom."

Parent:
"I would like to do that, but with my job it may be difficult."

Teacher:
"We will be having some activities after school and in the evenings for parents, so perhaps we can get together then. Also, I would be willing to meet with you before school if you would like to set up an appointment."

Parent:
"O.K., maybe I can work out something."

Teacher:
"Again, my name is (your name). If you have any questions you can reach me by calling the school during my planning time which is (time of day) or leave a message and I will get back to you later that day. The number is (school phone number). I look forward to meeting you. Thank you for your time--Good evening."

Parent:
"Thank you for calling."

Other Uses of the Telephone in Communicating with Parents

Automatic Telephone Answering or Message Machines:

Schools are using automatic telephone answering or message machines to provide information to parents on a call-in basis. Information on topics similar to those addressed in school newsletters or handbooks, but in an oral rather than a written form can be provided. Messages can be recorded in the languages spoken by the parent community.

Automated telephone systems or telephone answering machines can be used, as follows:

- The telephone can serve as a recorded bulletin board giving time, date, and place for upcoming parent meetings, extra curricular activities, and school events. These messages are changed regularly.

Activity Sheet #5, continued.

- The telephone system can provide pre-recorded information on district or school specific programs such as busing schedules, school lunch programs, and integration or magnet school options.

- The telephone can be used to give pre-recorded information to students and parents on general topics of concern such as drug and alcohol abuse, ways for parents to help their children succeed in school, school laws, and testing. A card is distributed to all parents which lists the available pre-recorded messages.

The advantages of automated systems are that they are inexpensive to operate and the caller can remain anonymous. However, callers need to be given numbers where they can get additional help. (Chrispeels, Boruta, Daugherty, 1988)

Additional Examples:

In Casey County, Kentucky, some classrooms have been outfitted with portable phones to make it easier for parents and teachers to contact one another.

The Chapter 1 Program in Omaha, Nebraska, has established a telephone service called the Chapter 1 Talk Box. Callers hear a three-minutes message about books and reading. Messages are changed twice a week and correspond with lessons in the classroom.

At Lincoln Prep High School in San Diego, the school helps students and their families find needed community services through a school-sponsored telephone referral system.

In Connecticut, ten schools have been using the telephone as a constant link between schools and families. As part of a pilot program offered by the Southern New England Telecommunications Corporation, several classrooms have been equipped with a phone message service that can send recorded messages of any length simultaneously to all students, or to any parent individually. Parents can also leave messages to which the teacher responds. Teacher Madeline Mongillo uses the system to send messages to parents about each day's assignments and activities. It replaces the old paper messages, she says, that often would get lost in students' book bags.
(Liontos, 1992)

TransParent School Model:

In the TransParent School Model, every teacher records a short message daily in an "electronic mailbox." When parents call and enter the teacher's code number, they hear a summary of what the students studied that day, homework assignments, suggestions to parents, and information about school activities. The message can be accessed from any touch-tone phone at any time. For more information contact: Jerold P. Bauch, Director, Betty Phillips Center for Parenthood Education, Box 81, Peabody College of Vanderbilt University, Nashville, Tennessee 37203. (615) 322-8080. (Bauch, 1990.)

Activity Sheet #6

Communicating through Meetings

Research indicates that parents value highly face-to-face interactions with teachers and other school personnel. Meetings can be a valuable vehicle for providing this contact that is essential in building the rapport, trust, and understanding necessary for parents and teachers to work together. Important goals for all meetings are to convey information about the school and its programs, and to initiate and maintain a positive feeling about the school and staff.

"Meetings will be more successful if those who are planning the meeting follow some of these proven practices:

- Vary the types of meetings.
- Involve a cross-section of parents in planning school meetings.
- Set an attendance target and decide how best to achieve it.
- Make sure the purpose is clear and important to parents.
- Hold meetings at times most convenient for the intended audience.
- Provide adequate advance notice.
- Have parent volunteers call other parents.
- Announce the meeting on the school marquee.
- Send follow-up reminders.
- Provide child care or involve children in the program.
- Provide transportation if needed.
- Evaluate the meeting to see it can be improved in the future."

(Chrispeels, Boruta, Daugherty, 1988)

Ideas for various type of meetings appear below. In attracting parents to events at the school, planners need to keep in mind the "Three F's"--Family, Food and Fun.

Open Houses or Curriculum Nights:

An Open House or Curriculum Night works best if held once a year, at a time of low schedule conflict, and with much advance **planning, preparation and publicity.**

Parents at both elementary and secondary levels are more likely to attend when:

- their child is featured in some way,
- there will be an opportunity to examine student work and talk with teachers,
- the time is convenient,
- they receive a personal welcome or invitation,
- they expect to experience a cordial atmosphere, including refreshments,
- the open house has a stated purpose the parents consider personally important, and
- they have been involved in the planning.

The Open House or Curriculum Night may be the culminating event of a schoolwide art exhibit or science fair.

Activity Sheet #6, continued.

Organizing an Open House or Curriculum Night:

1. Invitations: Have the students make them or send them to the parents the week before school starts. Students love the important responsibility of inviting their parents to the open house for you!

2. Name Tags: Have students make them during the day or as parents enter the room in the evening.

3. Agenda: The principal or teacher may briefly address the entire group, sharing information on general school goals and policies. Each teacher discusses the following with the parents of his/her students:
   a. Welcome the parents.
   b. Respond to first of the year questions/concerns.
   c. Explain the academic direction for the year--curriculum areas in which the class will be working; major requirements such as book reports, special projects; the grading scale.
   d. Explain the discipline plan.
   e. Identify ways parents can contribute to their child's learning and how the teacher will communicate with the parents--what they can expect of the teacher and what the teacher expects of them. For example, the teacher expects them to see that their child does 30 minutes of homework each night; they can expect to receive a parent bulletin each Friday.
   f. Answer any other questions the parents may have.
   g. Thank the parents for coming. End the session promptly.
   (Adapted from Porter,n.d.)

Grade Level Sessions:

Another approach to the Open House or Curriculum night is to hold Grade Level Sessions. By dividing a large group of parents into grade-level sessions, classroom teachers could relate their grade-level expectations of the year's work, familiarize parents with textbooks, and show the schedule of a typical day. This might prove a good time to acquaint parents with educational terms such as "computer-assisted instruction," "learning centers," "behavior modification," etc. Some teachers use grade-level meetings to actually give lessons to parents--the same lessons the children receive in the classroom. This way, parents experience for themselves the kind of instruction the child encounters. (Autrey, 1985)

Introducing the Year's Parent Activities:

The Open House or Curriculum Night can also be used to tell parents about ways they can help their children lean more at home. The workshops on families and homework give many good ideas in this area, too. The school and teacher's plan for involving parents throughout the year can be discussed, and volunteers recruited to help plan and carry out home-school partnership activities.

Activity Sheet #6, continued.

Open House or Curriculum Night Entertainment:
Although visiting children's classrooms and meeting teachers is the heart of Open House or Curriculum Nights, consider "jazzing up" the occasion. A meal or a covered-dish supper could be served ahead of time with entertainment provided by the students. This way, dinner is taken care of, parents can watch their children perform--and they are in school learning what goes on there.

Other Types of Parent Meetings:

Orientation Night:

The school hosts an Orientation Night during the first week or two of school. This meeting provides an opportunity for parents to learn about schoolwide policies and programs such as discipline, homework, extra curricular activities, scheduling and how parents can be involved. In addition, parents may meet with teachers individually, by grade level, or by departments.

Teachers explain the curriculum, materials, classroom organization, behavior codes, expectations, and planned activities for the year. Teachers sometimes use this time to teach demonstration lessons so that parents can be exposed to the same kinds of lessons their children experience at school. (Chrispeels, Boruta, Daugherty, 1988)

Potluck Luncheon with the Teachers:

Teachers invite their students' parents to a noon potluck luncheon in the classroom. In an informal way, the teacher shares the current activities of the classroom. The informality will help parents feel more comfortable in coming to school.

Take a Parent to Lunch:

Help working parents to become active by asking them to visit the school during their lunch hour and eat lunch with their children and classmates. The principal and teachers move about the lunchroom getting to know parents and discussing the school.

Continental Breakfast for Parents:

Parents, especially fathers, are invited to come to school for a continental breakfast with their children and to spend the morning in observation and discussion. Their children take them on guided tours of the school. The parents hear from their children's teachers about the year's goals, methods, and schedules. They visit classes where they can see first hand what their children are doing.

Activity Sheet # 7

Ideas for Overcoming School, Classroom and Staff Barriers to Communicating with Parents

Category: School: _____ Classroom: _____ Staff:_____

Hindering Factors:	**Strategies to Overcome Hindering Factors:**

Activity Sheet #8

Communication Strategies Used in Our Schools

Category of Communication:

Please check one of the categories below:

_____1. Beginning of the School Year
_____2. On-going Communications
_____3. Occasional Communications
_____4. End of the School Year

Directions:

With other members of your group, please list the ways you communicate in the category checked with families of the students in your school and classrooms. List your responses below:

Example: On-going Communications--Newletters

D-65

Activity Sheet #9

Communications Checklist

Directions: *Use this checklist to analyze the communication strategies you listed on the "Communication Strategies Used in Our Schools." Indicate Y=Yes, N=No, M=Maybe.*

_____ 1. Are a variety of communication strategies used to convey the same information, e.g., face-to-face, telephone, video, conferences?
Comment:

_____ 2. Do the communication strategies promote two-way exchange of information?
Comment:

_____ 3. Is the information communicated of value to parents/families?
Comment:

____ 4. Are provisions made to communicate in other languages if there are non-English speaking families?
Comment:

____ 5. Are parents made to feel comfortable in communicating with school staff?
Comment:

____ 6. Are school policies, expectations, goals, communicated in clear, easy-to-read language?
Comment:

____ 7. Are communications timely, i.e., the notes go out before the activity or before there is a crisis?
Comment:

____8. Are communications and out-reach activities extensive enough to reach every family?
Comment:

___ 9. Do communications about the child describe strengths and progress when discussing problems?
Comment:

Activity Sheet #10

Force Field Analysis of Communication Strategies

Category of Communication: Please check one of the categories below:

____1. Beginning of the School Year
____2. On-going Communications
____3. Occasional Communications
____4. End of the School Year

Directions: Please list the strengths and constraints on the various types of communications you listed on **Activity Sheet No. 8, "Communication Strategies Used in Our Schools,"** under the appropriate column below.

Type of Communication:____

Strengths	**Constraints**

Type of Communication:____

Strengths	**Constraints**

List the communication strategy that you are committing to improve in your classroom or school:____

How would you strengthen this strategy? Indicate techniques you would use to overcome the constraints and build on strengths. (Use back of page for your comments.)

Activity Sheet #11

Next Steps for Strengthening Home-School Communications

Step 1:

a. List 3-4 strengths of the home-school communications in your school or district:

b. List 3-4 areas that need to be improved in home-school communications in your school or district.

Step 2: What are the next steps that need to be taken to strengthen home-school communication in your school or district? Use form below to plan the action steps.

Action Steps	Who Will Do It?	When Will It Be Done?	Evidence Completed?
1.			
2.			
3.			
4.			
5.			
6.			
7.			
8.			

Multicultural Communication Resources

Multicultural Communication

Brislin, R., et.al. (1986). *Intercultural Interactions: A Practical Guide.* Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications.

Dodd, C. and Montalvo, F., eds. (1987). *Intercultural Skills for Multicultural Societies.* Washington, DC: Sietar International.

Gudykunst, W. and Kim, Y.Y. (1984). *Communication with Strangers: An Introduction to Intercultural Communication.* New York: McGraw

Klopf, D. (1987). *Workbook for Intercultural Encounters: The Fundamentals of Intercultural Communication.* Englewood, CO: Morton Publishing Company.

Kohls, R. (1984). *Survival Kit for Overseas Living.* 2nd Ed. Yarmouth, ME: Intercultural Press.

Loder, M. and Rosener, J. (1990). *Workforce America! Managing Employee Diversity as a Vital Resource.* Homewood, IL: Business One Irwin.

Prosser, M. (1985). *The Cultural Dialogue: An Introduction to Intercultural Communication.* Washington, DC: Sietar International.

Storti, C. (1990). *The Art of Crossing Cultures.* Yarmouth, ME: Intercultural Press.

Thiederman, S. (1990). *Bridging Cultural Barriers for Corporate Success: How to Manage a Multicultural Workforce.* New York: Free Press.

Tyler, V.L. (1987). *Intercultural Interacting.* Provo, UT: Brigham Young University, D.M. Kennedy Center.

Race and Ethnic Relations in America

Blumenthal, S. and Ozer, J. (1980). *Coming to America: Immigrants from the British Isles.* New York: Delacorte Press.

Jiobu, R. (1988). *Ethnicity and Assimilation: Blacks, Chinese, Filipinos, Japanese, Koreans, Mexicans, Vietnamese, and Whites.* Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.

Mindel, C., et.al. (1988). *Ethnic Families in America: Patterns and Vibrations.* New York: Elsevier.

Perrin, L. (1980). *Coming to America: Immigrants for the Far East.* New York: Delacorte Press.

D-69

Race and Ethnic Relations in America, continued.

Rips, G. (1981). Coming to America: Immigrants from Southern Europe. New York: Delacorte Press.

Orfield, G. and Ashkinaze, C. (1991). The Closing Door: Conservative Policy and Black Opportunity. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Takaki, R. (1990). Iron Cages: Race and Culture in 19th Century America. New York: Oxford University Press.

Travis, D.J. (1991). Racism: American Style: A Corporate Gift. Chicago: Urban Research Press.

Van Dijk, T.A. (1987). Communicating Racism: Ethnic Prejudice in in Thought and Talk. Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications.

Culture-specific Communication

Condon, J. (1984). With Respect to the Japanese: A Guide for Americans. Yarmouth, ME: Intercultural Press.

Condon, J. (1985). Good Neighbors: Communicating with the Mexican. Yarmouth, ME: Intercultural Press.

Fieg, J.P. (1989). A Common Core: Thais and Americans. Yarmouth, ME: Intercultural Press.

Gochenour, T. (1990) Considering Filipinos. Yarmouth, ME: Intercultural Press.

Kochman, T. (1983). Black and White Styles in Communication. Univ of Chicago Press.

Kras, E. (1988). Management in Two Cultures: Bridging the Gap Between U.S. and Mexican Managers. Yarmouth, ME: Intercultural Press.

Nydell, M. (1987). Understanding Arabs: A Guide to Westerners. Yarmouth, ME: Intercultural Press.

Stewart, E. and Bennett, M. (1991). American Cultural Patterns: A Cross-cultural Perspective. Yarmouth, ME: Intercultural Press.

Wenzhong, H. and Grove, C. (1991). Encountering the Chinese: A Guide for Americans. Yarmouth, ME: Intercultural Press.

(Bibliography compiled by Mikel Hogan Garcia, Ph.D., California State University at Fullerton, (714) 773-3309. Used with permission.)

Resource Materials #B.

Invitation Letter to a Parent-Teacher Conference

Dear Parent:

Next week you and I will have an opportunity to talk about someone very important--your child. When we meet at parent-teacher conferences next week, we will be talking about these things:

1. *How your child is doing.*
2. *What we've done... and plan to do in our class.*
3. *How we can work together as partners to provide the best possible education for your child.*

Perhaps you have some things you would like to talk about, too, such as homework, how you can help at home, in the classroom, and school policies. Please write down some questions or topics you would like to discuss at the conference on the form below.

Our conference is scheduled for (date) at (time). If this time is not all right for you, please indicate two other choices below. I will try to meet one of them.

Please return the form below by ________________. I am looking forward to meeting with you as we work together to make this a good learning year for your child.

Sincerely,

____

Fourth Grade Teacher

Parent's Name:________________________ Child's Name: ____________________

1. The appointment on (day)________________ at (time)______ is satisfactory.
2. I am unable to meet at the time you suggest. Could we me on:

_____________________ at ______ or __________________ at _______
(date) (time) (date) (time)

3. I am especially interested in discussing:

____

____

Resource Material #C.

Teacher Checklist for Parent-Teacher Conference Worksheet

Before the Conference:

_____1. Notify Parents
    -- purpose, place, time, length of time allotted
_____2. Send questions and worksheets to parents to help them prepare for the conference.
_____3. Prepare:
    -- review child's folder
    -- gather examples of work
    -- gather input from students
    -- prepare materials
____4. Plan agenda:
    -- use worksheet
____5. Arrange environment

During the Conference:

____1. Welcome:
    -- establish rapport
____2. State:
    -- purpose
    -- time limitations
    -- note taking
    -- options for follow-up
___3. Encourage:
    -- information sharing (e.g., What do you think your child does well?)
    -- comments
    -- questions (e.d., Do you have any questions for me?)
___4. Listen:
    -- pause once in awhile
    -- look for verbal and nonverbal clues
    -- questions
___5. Develop an action plan
___6. Summarize
___7. End on a positive note.

(Chrispeels, Boruta, Daugherty, 1988)

D-72

Resource Materials #D

Teacher Evaluation of Parent-Teacher Conference

	Always	**Some-times**	**Never**
1. I prepared for the conference in advance.			
2. I gave parents some ideas in advance of the topics to be discussed.			
3. I allowed enough time for conferences.			
4. I had a comfortable setting.			
5. The setting was private, without interruptions.			
6. I began the conference on a positive note.			
7. I listened attentively to verbal and non-verbal responses.			
8. I avoided becoming defensive when parents questioned my judgment.			
9. I maintained an open mind to parents' ideas.			
10.I encouraged parents to talk and offer suggestions.			
11.I planned with--not for--the parents.			
12.I avoided overwhelming parents will irrelevant material or jargon.			
13.I am well informed about what is happening in my school.			
14.I follow up on commitments made during conferences.			
15.I learned information from the conference that will help me teach the child.			
16.During my next conference(s) I plan to do the following differently:			

(Adapted from Banach, 1982; Rotter, 1987.

"A conference is successful when the parents and the teacher go away from it feeling good about each other."(Rabbit, 1978)

Resource Materials #E.

Alternatives for Non-Attending Parents

Some parents may not acknowledge the school's invitation for a parent-teacher conference. In some cases there may be difficult, unavoidable circumstances. Lack of interest may not be the reason. Other ways to communicate with these parents, or if necessary, a substitute/advocate for the student may involve the following suggestions:

- Assign the parent follow-up efforts to home-based advisor-teacher.

- Although the ultimate responsibilities for the conference are with the home room teachers, enlist the help of all teachers and personnel in the building.

- For those children who need a surrogate adult, ask a parent volunteer to be that child's advocate. Arrange for the advocate to support the child's academic progress.

- Teachers may want to make home visits to home of students who parents do not attend conferences. Some parent are only comfortable on "their own home territory." Teachers may wish to team home visits.

- Look at the whole area of the convenience of the conference. Was transportation a problem? Was the time designated difficult for employed parents?

- Expand home-school communications in additional ways. Ask teachers to provide parents with the time of their planning period and with the school telephone number. Make one afternoon of each week "Call the Principal" time.

- If the teacher cannot speak the parents' language, recruit a bilingual parent to communicate for, and with, the parents who have not attended the conference. Also, ask that parent to volunteer to translate written materials for the non-English speaking family.

- Explore the possibility of setting up conferences in neighborhood sites. Recreation centers, church education buildings and housing project meeting rooms in those areas may be locations that parents will find more comfortable and more accessible.

- Use the traditional means of communicating with parents such as newsletters and handwritten notes. Involve the children in these methods; mention specific positive activities of children.

- Have volunteers make games suggested in parent materials. Deliver these into home of non-attending parents; explain the games(s) to interest parents in working with their children. •

- Consider community groups who may adopt the school and become valuable links between the school and homes of non-participating parents. (Chrispeels, 1990)

D-74

Resource Materials #F

Do's and Don't s of Rapport Building with Parents

A. **DO: Establish rapport first before moving on to sensitive issues.**

Make parents feel comfortable and welcomed if the meeting is in the school where the parents may feel threatened

- Provide a beverage, etc.
- Start the conversation with "small talk" on neutral topics.

B. **DO: Choose an appropriate moment to begin discussing the child's strengths and weaknesses.**

Some parents may be overly concerned and want to start right in before establishing rapport; others may prefer to prolong the small talk.

Always keep in mind the close association parents perceive between themselves and their child.

C. **DO: Exchange views about the child's program or problem to dispel false beliefs of either the parent, the teacher or both.**

DON'T: Anticipate the parent's particular concern or understanding of the problem.

D.When responding to an implicit or explicit personal accusation of the parent:
DO: Respond to the parent's feeling, not your own.

Restate the parent's claim with some of his/her own words.

Ask for more information on the parent's particular perception.

Be very careful of your tone of voice.

DON'T: Be defensive--avoid the instinct to defend yourself from a personal charge.

(Adapted from: Thomas M. Stephens and Joan S. Wolf, *Effective Skills in Parent/Teacher Conferencing*. Columbus, Ohio: Ohio State University, 1980.)

Resource Materials #G.

Do's and Don'ts of Obtaining Information about Parents Perceptions and Concerns

A. DO: Seek parents' views about their child's school adjustments.

Be a good listener.

Ask for clarification if necessary.

Encourage the flow of information.

Guide the direction of the discussion,if it gets off target, by asking questions.

Ask questions which require the parent to elaborate and give some information, rather than questions which require a simple yes or no.

B. DO: Avoid putting parents on the defensive about their child.

Avoid using negatively phrased questions.

Remember parents' strong empathy for their child.

Move gently into difficult subject areas.

Convey positive attitudes and helpful suggestions to help get parents' cooperation.

C. DON'T: Use educational jargon.

D. DON'T: Be defensive.

E. DON'T: Talk about irrelevant topics.

F. DO: Decide when and how it is best to answer parents' questions, while always being responsive to questions at some point.

(Adapted from: Thomas M. Stephens and Joan S. Wolf, *Effective Skills in Parent/Teacher Conferencing.* Columbus, Ohio: Ohio State University, 1980)

Resource Materials #H.

Tips for Dealing With Aggression

Do:

______1. Listen.
______2. Write down what they say.
______3. When they slow down, ask them what else is bothering them.
______4. Exhaust their list of complaints.
______5. Ask them to clarify any specific complaints that are too general.
______6. Show them the list and ask if it is complete.
______7. Ask them for suggestions for solving any of the problems they've listed.
______8. Write down their suggestions.
______9. As much as possible, mirror their body posture during this process.
______10. As they speak louder, you speak softer.

Don't:

______1. Argue.
______2. Defend or become defensive.
______3. Promise things you can't do or produce.
______4. Own problems that belong to others.
______5. Raise your voice.
______6. Belittle or minimize the problem.

♦ These behaviors take practice. Our first automatic reaction is almost always just the reverse of the way to defuse anger or hostility.

♦ Parents may have some real legitimate concerns that you can do something about immediately.

♦ Think about the times that you have been angry enough to become aggressive with someone you don't know well, like a clerk in a store or an attendant at a games, etc. It usually takes some time to "build up courage" to attack and often the person attacked cannot do anything about the somebody out there to listen. You may be just catching the flack of the general frustration of someone who is unable to cope with the world at that time.
(Chrispeels, 1990)

D-77

Resource Materials: #I.

Tips for Written Communication

The key to creating effective written materials is the presentation and the reading level of the materials, say D-Angelo and Adler. They suggest the following tips, from Push Literacy Action Now of Washington, D.C. to help educators develop better written information for parents:

1. Keep sentences short (never more than twenty words).

2. Keep paragraphs short (an average of six lines).

3. Use easy, short, familiar words.

4. Get to the point; omit irrelevant information.

5. Write things in logical order (who, what, where, when, why and how).

6. Be definite; give a clear picture of what you want to say.

7. Be direct. Speak to each reader. Say "you should" instead of "parents should."

8. Use the active voice more than the passive. Put the subject at the beginning of the sentence ("Please sign the consent slip" rather than "A consent slip must be signed").

9. Use pictures and subheads. Readers tend to drown in a sea of solid text. Bold print emphasizes important words or phrases.

10. Watch type size and use of capital letters. Don't over use capitals; they are hard to read. For easy reading use at least 12 point type.

11. Know your audience. How well do they read? If you aren't sure, test your materials on a few representative people.

12. Be yourself. Write as you would talk. Write to express, not to impress.

13. Write and rewrite. Read a draft over. Can you say something more succinctly or in a more interesting way? Have you used jargon or abbreviations that your audience may not know? Ask someone else to read what you've written. Then rewrite it.

Source: Adapted from D'Angelo and Adler (1991)

(Liontos, 1992)

D-78

Resource Materials #J.

Sample Early Fall Letter to Parents

Dear Parent,

As the new school year begins, I am looking forward to working with your child and offering all students a wide variety of learning experiences.

I want to keep in touch with all parents. Each week you will be receiving a report on your child's progress. On Mondays your son or daughter will bring home a "Parent Bulletin" including the past week's work. Please sign these weekly bulletins and return them to school the next day. I welcome your comments on them.

The school's open hour or curriculum night will be held on ________________ this year. Each teacher will talk about his/her classroom and plans for the year. I hope you can attend to learn about what your child will be studying.

I suggest that every child spend at least one-half hour each night on school-related work. This time can be spent finishing the day's assignments, studying spelling words or math facts, reviewing a language, social studies or health/science lesson, or reading a book of their choice. This is a good way to help develop good study habits and self-discipline.

Homework time should rarely exceed an hour. If your child spends more time, he or she may not be making the best use of class time. We may need to work together to strengthen his or her study skills.

Let your child know you are interested in his or her work and want to know what is going on in school. Encourage them to share their school experiences with you. Please, let's keep the channels of communication open. If you want to talk to me, please feel free to call me at school, 100-0000. I will be happy to see you.

Let's look forward to a super year!

Sincerely,

(Classroom Teacher)

Message to the Teacher:

_____ I would like to talk with you.
_____ I would like to visit my child's classroom on ________________
_____ I will help with refreshments for one class party.
_____ I would be willing to help in another way. Describe:
_____ Other Comments:

Parent's Signature:______________________ Date:___________ Phone:________

Resource Materials #K.

Additional Resources on Communicating with Parents

Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development. *Guidelines for parent-teacher conferences.* Videotape. 27 minutes. (Contact: ASCD, 1250 North Pitt Street, Alexandria, VA 22314-1403, phone: (713) 549-9110.)

This videotape provides teacher and administrators with clear explanations and demonstrations of how to conduct a conference on motivational concerns. The 27-minute videotape demonstrates 8 guidelines for these conferences. Teachers in actual conferences demonstrate each of the guidelines.

Bauch, J.P. (1990). Touch 1 for improved parent-teacher contact. *School Safety,* Spring, 1990, 25-27.

A new telecommunication system called the "Transparent School Model" is described in this article. Through the use of a touch tone phone, parents can receive information from a short message recorded daily by the teacher. Information relative homework assignments, what the students are studying, school activities, and suggestions to parents are recorded in the "electronic mailbox."

California State PTA. (1991) *Parents Empowering Parents: the California State PTA Parent Education Manual.* Educational Assessment Publishing Company, Inc.

Although this publication is written from the parents' viewpoint, educators will find the chapters, "Parent-School Communication" and "Parent-School Conferences," helpful. Samples of a beginning of the school year letter, on-going communications, "teacher-grams", problem-solving in parent-teacher conferences, and a sample conference follow-up letter are included.

Chrispeels, J. (1990) *Parent-Teacher Conferencing: A Workshop for School Staff.* San Diego, California: author.

This booklet contains the presenter's script, workshop handouts, and masters for overhead transparencies for a workshop on parent-teacher conferences. The workshop provides instruction in the nine actions necessary for successful conference preparation, the three steps for effective conferences, the six phases of a report conference, and seven phases of a problem-solving conference.

Chrispeels, J. (1988) Building collaboration through parent-teacher conferencing. *Educational Horizons*, 66 (2), 84-86.

This article discusses the importance of teachers' attitudes toward parent-teacher conferences, how to lay the ground work for the first conference, and preparing, conducting, and following up on the conference.

Resource Materials #K, continued.

Chrispeels, J.; Boruta, M., and Daughtery, M. (1988) *Communicating with Parents*. San Diego, California: San Diego County Office of Education.

Designed to help schools and teachers communicate better with parents, this notebook is divided into two sections. The first half focuses on schoolwide communications and involvement strategies. The second half of the book addresses teacher-parent communications and is organized to share examples and ideas on how individual teachers can improve their working relations with parents. Many examples of newsletters, student handbooks, survey forms, introductory letters, student progress reports, and checklists are included.

Granowky, A., Rose, A., and Barton, N. Parents as partners in education. *Ginn Occasional Papers*. Ginn and Company.

This paper contains practical approaches for building home-school partnerships. Strategies for encouraging parents to become involved are given, including those for scheduling conferences. Preparations for a conference which need to be done by teachers as well as responsibilities for other school staff are listed. Finally, evaluation of the conferences by parents provide guidance for future conferences.

Henderson, A.T., Marburger, C.L. & Ooms,T. (1986) *Beyond the Bake Sale: an Educator's Guide to Working with Parents*. Columbia, Maryland: The National Committee for Citizens in Education. 139 pages.

Beginning with the five types of parent involvement in education, this book encourages educators to examine their attitudes and practices toward parent involvement through several checklists. Barriers to home-school collaboration are examined, and helpful hints are given for teachers and principals in dealing with parents.

Lawrence, G. & Hunter, M. *Parent-Teacher Conferencing*. El Segundo, California: TIP Publications. 103 pages.

This publication is a comprehensive guide to parent-teacher conferences. Among the topics covered are various types of conferences, conferencing skills, communication theory, special problems, and logistics. Throughout the publication, principles are illustrated with realistic examples of dialogue between parents and teachers. Examples of forms, memos and notes relative to parent-teacher conferences are also included.

Rich, Dorothy. (1987) *Teachers and Parents: an Adult-to-Adult Approach*. Washington, D.C.: National Education Association. 112 pages.

This monograph focuses on the complementary roles of parents and teachers. Among topics covered are the changing family situations, building trust between teachers and parents, examples

Resource Materials #K, continued.

of specific activities teachers can do to build home-school partnerships, and working with single parent families. One sections discusses parent-teacher conferences.

Riepe, L.D. (1990) For the benefit of all: planning and conducting effect parent conferences. *Exchange*. August, 47-49.

Some of the barriers to good communication between parents and teachers are identified in this article. Teachers need to gather data, including, anecdotes about the child, so that they can give specific examples of the child's progress and needs. The conference should be a discussion, between the parent and teacher, rather than a lecture. A rewarding aspect of parent-teacher conferences is the way children improve as result of them.

Stephens, T. M. & Wolf, J.S. *Effective Skills in Parent/Teacher Conferencing*. 22 pages. Columbus, Ohio: Ohio State University, 1980.

Four steps in parent-teacher conferences are covered in this booklet: rapport building, obtaining information, providing helpful information, closing and follow-up activities. Exchanging information about the child without fault-finding, formulating questions, dealing with special problems, describing students' progress, and training activities are also included.

REFERENCES

Autrey, J. (1985). Communications vital to learning process. *Alabama Education.* March.

Banach, W.J. (1982). *The Parent Conference Planner.* Mt. Clemens, Michigan: Macomb Intermediate School District.

Bauch, J.P. (1990). Touch 1 for improved parent teacher contact. *School Safety*, Spring, 25-27.

Cale, L.B. (1992). *Parent-Teacher Communication: A Handbook for Parents and Teachers.* Phoenix, Arizona: author.

Chrispeels, J.A. (1987). The family as an educational resource. *Community Education Journal*, April, pp.10-17.

Chrispeels, J.A. (1990). *Parent-Teacher Conferencing: A Workshop for School Staff.* San Diego, California: author.

Chrispeels, J.A., Boruta, M. and Daugherty, M. (1988) *Communicating with Parents.* San Diego, California: San Diego County Office of Education.

Decker, L.E. & Decker, V.A. (1986). *Home-School-Community Involvement and Partnership Strategies.* Review Edition. Charlottesville, Virginia: Community Collaborators, Inc.

Faison, H. (1984.) A forgotten resource: home visits. *Principal, 63, 49.*

Liontos, L.B. (1992). Communication: The importance of personal contact. *At-Risk Families and Schools: Becoming Partners.* Eugene, Oregon: ERIC Clearninghouse on Educational Management, University of Oregon.

Moles, O.C. (1993). Collaboration between schools and disadvantaged parents: obstacles and openings. N. Chavkin (ed.) *Families and Schools in a Pluralistic Society.* Albany, N.Y.: SUNY Press.

NCPIE. (1990). *Quiz Reveals Underused Resource for Education.* Washington, D.C.: National Coalition for Parent Involvement in Education.

Office of Community Development. (n.d.). Personalized communication: the home visitation program. *Parent Involvement Fact Sheet No. 4.* Boston, Massachusetts: Massachusetts Department of Education.

Operation Fail-Safe. (1979). Parent Evaluation Form: Parent/Teacher Conferences. Houston, Texas: Houston Independent School District.

Rabbit, J.A. (1978). The parent/teacher conference: trauma or teamwork? *Phi Delta Kappan, 471-472.*

Roberts, J.C. (n.d.). *Teachers and Telephones--That Good Message.* Bellingham, Washington: Bellingham School District.

Rotter, J.C., Robinson, E.H., and Foley, M.A. (1987) Roadblocks and green lights. *Parent-Teacher Conferencing.* Second Edition. National Education Association.

Stephens, T.M. and Wolf, J.S. (1980). *Effective Skills in Parent-Teacher Conferencing.* Columbus, Ohio: Ohio State University.

D-84

PARTICIPANT EVALUATION FORM

Building Home-School Partnerships for Learning

This has been a pilot workshop. Please help us revise it for wider use by answering the following questions.

Name of Workshop: ________________________ Date: ____

School District: ________________________ State: ____

Name of Your School or Organization: ____________________

1. What was the most helpful aspect of this workshop? Why?

2. What was the least helpful aspect of this workshop? Why?

3. If this workshop is presented again, what would you change and why?

I am (check one)

___ a K-3 grade teacher
___ a 4-6 grade teacher
___ a principal
___ another school site professional (specify) ____________
___ a school district staff member
___ a school district official
___ a parent
___ other (specify) ________________

Thank you for taking part in this workshop and giving us your thoughts on it. We hope you will find it useful in building stronger partnerships with the parents of your students.

E-1

Building Home-School Partnerships for Learning: Workshops for Urban Educators (Pilot Version)

Homework and Home Learning Activities

Workshop Leader's Guide

Developed for
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
U.S. Department of Education
by Janet Chrispeels

KEY CONCEPT

Families are more likely to reinforce and extend classroom instruction at home when teachers give high quality homework assignments, provide home learning ideas and materials, and guide families in how to help.

RATIONALE AND PURPOSE

Research has shown that homework given in the elementary grades is an important means of extending children's learning time and building positive study habits which benefit students throughout their academic careers. Teachers' practices critically influence the amount and type of learning activities in which parents engage with their children (Epstein and Becker 1982 a and b; and Epstein and Dauber, 1988). Therefore, teachers need to develop homework assignments that are interesting and appropriate for students. In addition, the school staff needs to become aware of school and classroom factors which promote and hinder parents' involvement in their children's learning at home and work to enhance the promoting factors and eliminate the hindering factors.

Research has also shown that families differ in their approach and ability to assist their children with homework and to engage in home learning activities (Caplan, Choy, and Whitmore, 1992; Clark, 1983; Clark, 1992; Lareau and Benson, 1984). Because of these differences, schools and teachers need to take a more active, coherent and consistent approach to homework. In addition, teachers need to provide guidance and support to families in ways that will reinforce and enhance family learning practices.

The purpose of this workshop is to assist school staff (principal and teachers) in developing coherent schoolwide homework guidelines, practices, and high quality homework, and in implementing home learning programs that engage families and extend children's learning time away from school.

LEARNER OBJECTIVES

By the end of this workshop, participants will be able to:

1. Define the characteristics of high quality homework assignments;
2. Understand the research on homework and home learning;
3. Define the roles and responsibility of school, grade level teams, and individual teachers in regard to homework and home learning activities;
4. Know how to modify homework assignments to include family and / or community interaction;
5. Describe at least four family learning programs (objective for longer version);
6. Develop a plan of action in regard to homework and home learning (objective longer version).

E-3

ESTIMATED TIME: See individual activities for time variations

This workshop is designed to be presented in several different time frames to meet a variety of staff development needs. The amount of time devoted to this workshop depends on whether the goal is to provide information and awareness of the topic, or to use the workshop as a springboard for changing school practices by taking time to discuss the topic more fully and to develop a school level action plan.

Option 1: If a school has only a one-hour time frame for after-school staff development, the workshop can be divided into one-hour blocks. ***Activities #1-#3*** (also Objectives 1-3) can be covered within about an hour, if the reporting for ***Activity #3*** is done at the beginning of the second workshop. ***Activities #4 and #5*** can then be covered in a second workshop, and Activities ***#6 and #7*** in a third.

Option 2: If only one two-hour staff development session is available, all the material in the workshop can be presented. However, the workshop leader will need to follow the suggested time allocations closely, and there will be limited time for discussion and practice of skills. There will be no time for ***Activity #6***, the planning activity, and only a brief overview of ***Activity #5***.

Option 3: If three and a half or four hours are available for this workshop, there will be time for more discussion, practice in converting homework ideas into interactive home learning materials, and for developing an action plan.

Option 4: If this is a topic a school wishes to cover in more depth to actually bring about school change, the workshop activities easily lend themselves to that purpose. For example, after the first three activities are presented, the school staff may want to spend time developing a homework policy. Similarly, once the concept of developing home learning materials is presented, one to two hours could be devoted to converting traditional homework assignments into interactive family assignments or developing home learning materials following the TIPS and Capistrano models. A separate hour-long session could then be devoted to exploring home learning programs. ***Activity #6,*** is also flexible, depending on how complete an action plan the school wants to develop.

ACTIVITIES	TIME ESTIMATE	
	Shorter	**Longer**
#1 Introduction: What are the characteristics of high quality homework?	20 min	20 min.
#2 Understanding Some of the Research on Homework	20 min.	20 min.
#3 Developing schoolwide homework guidelines and practices	30 min.	35 min.
#4 Developing interactive home learning activities	30 min.	40 min.
#5 Exploring school level family learning programs	10 min.	40 min.
#6 Taking the next steps (for Options 1, 3, & 4 if more than two hours are available)		40 min.
#7 Summary and conclusions	10 min.	15 min.
	120 min.	210 min.

E-4

TRANSPARENCIES: **Please see transparency section for list.**

PARTICIPANT WORKBOOK CONTENTS: **Please see participant workbook section**

WORKSHOP LOGISTICS

As the workshop leader, you will need to:

1. Duplicate sufficient copies of participant workbooks, make needed transparencies, and take care of other workshop logistics, such as securing flip chart, overhead projector, screen, name tags, pens and pencils, marking pens, blank transparencies;
2. Identify a workshop host who can make the room arrangements, prepare name tags, and organize refreshments, and child care, if necessary;
3. Arrange seating so that participants can work in groups, preferably seated around tables;
4. Post workshop agenda based on set of activities to be covered;
5. Make a welcoming sign with the following information:

> ***Welcome to Homework and Home Learning Activities for Students and their Families***
>
> 1. Please make a name tag.
> 2. While you wait:
>   a. Have some refreshments;
>   b. Look at the materials in your workbook;
>   c. Meet someone new.

AUDIENCE

The workshop is designed for teachers, administrators, and other school staff concerned about homework and home learning. Key family leaders, who will be involved in future planning activities, should be involved as part of the school team attending this workshop. The key family leaders may be members of a school advisory council, the school's restructuring committee, or from the PTA board or other parent group. It is important that both teachers and parents, who are selected to attend the workshop, be representative of the school/community, and be in a position to influence other teachers and parents. If parents are not included in the initial training, they subsequently need to be active participants in discussing and planning changes in homework policy and practices and in selecting potential home learning programs. This workshop may also be valuable for teacher educators to strengthen the skills of future teachers in collaborating with parents.

The information contained in this workshop should also be helpful for school district administrators in developing district homework policies and in knowing how best to encourage and support the development of high quality homework and home learning activities.

E-5

PREPARATION FOR THE WORKSHOP

Prior to leading this workshop, the workshop leader needs to:

- become familiar with the topic by reading the materials for the entire workshop, including some of the articles in the Reference and Reading List;
- talk with principals and teachers who have addressed the issues of homework, have developed good home learning materials, and who have implemented any of the family learning programs mentioned in ***Activity #5***;
- collect samples of homework policies from districts or schools who will be attending the workshop;
- familiarize one's self, as much as possible, with homework practices of workshop participants;
- study the workshop outline and adapt it to one's personal style and informational background. ***Activity #2*** involves a mini-lecture summarizing some of the research findings about homework. As the workshop leader you will want to become familiar with this material so that you can present it in your own words, adding appropriate illustrations from your experiences.

This workshop focuses on homework and home learning activities at both the school and classroom levels and examines schoolwide actions and teacher practices. Some teachers already have developed good homework practices and involve families in teacher-initiated home learning activities. However, as Epstein and Becker (1982) showed, these exemplary practices are not widespread. This is why this topic is approached from a schoolwide context. *Individual teachers will be greatly strengthened in their classroom practices if they are supported by schoolwide homework guidelines, programs, and resources.*

The workshop leader will want to stress throughout the workshop the need for the school to develop a positive, warm, and welcoming environment for parents and effective communication strategies as the foundation for involving families effectively in homework and home-learning activities. In other words, parents will best be able to assist their children's learning at home when:

- parents are made to feel welcome and comfortable at school;
- there is an extensive and regular means of two-way communication between home and school, especially about homework, expectations, the curriculum, student progress, and how parents can help;
- there are workshops for parents to learn how to help;
- there is a place at the school parents can meet and call their own;
- parents are given many opportunities at school to show their support for their children;
- when teachers are provided with opportunities to learn about students' families, how to communicate with them, and how to involve them in meaningful learning activities both at school and at home; and,
- parents have a meaningful role in shaping homework policies and practices and selecting home learning programs.

E-6

While this workshop stands on its own, it is also part of a series. It will be important for the leader of this workshop to be familiar with the other workshops and to know how this workshop builds on and complements the others. *The Families as Learning Environments* workshop helps to set the tone for the whole series by exploring the strengths and diversity of the families and ways schools can help families strengthen home learning environments for their children. The second workshop, *School Programs and Practices that Foster Home-School Partnerships*, links effective family practices with effective schools research and shows what must be done on a schoolwide level to develop a strong home-school partnership. The third workshop in the series, *Communication Strategies*, provides specific communication strategies that individual teachers can use to strengthen the home-school connection. *School District Policies and Supports* discusses the critical role of district leadership in creating the necessary policies, support, and context for school level initiatives in parent involvement.

A word of caution: developing sound homework practices, creating high quality homework assignments and home learning materials, and organizing family learning programs will require considerable commitment by the school staff. This workshop raises awareness of critical homework and home learning issues, and provides some possibilities for action. The activities in this workshop should enable the school staff to engage in systematic development of good homework practices; however, each site administrator will need to provide additional time and resources for the staff to accomplish these tasks.

Debates and Dilemmas

The most challenging task facing schools is learning new roles and responsibilities—a job that is never easy. There will be many questions, concerns, or issues that are likely to surface as schools implement schoolwide guidelines, programs, and practices to encourage homework and home learning activities. This workshop does not offer answers to all of the many debates and dilemmas that participants will have, nor is the workshop leader expected to have all the answers. Participants should be encouraged to look for solutions in their own context. The activities and information are designed to help participants move toward solutions. The following list of questions provides an outline of some of the key issues addressed by each activity:

1. What are the characteristics of high quality homework and what can be done to help teachers develop quality assignments? ***(Activity #1)***

2. How can homework be used to extend students' learning time and build home-school cooperation? ***(Activity #2)***

3. What kinds of guidelines and practices does the school have to put in place that will minimize homework hassles for students, parents, and teachers? ***(Activity #3)***

4. How can homework assignments be modified to be more interactive and involve family members? What can teachers do if there are no family members available to assist in home learning activities? ***(Activity #4)***

5. How can school-initiated family learning programs support student learning? What are the strengths and limits of such programs? **(Activity #5)**

6. How can a school develop an action plan to strengthen homework and home learning practices? ***(Activity #6)***

Activity #1: Introduction: What are the characteristics of high quality homework?

Objective: To introduce participants to each other and to describe the characteristics of high quality homework assignments.

Recommended Time: 20 minutes, short version; 20 minutes longer version

Directions and Procedures

1. Introduce self and topic of workshop to participants by stating the key concept underlying this workshop. ***Use T-1.***

2. Ask participants, if they are teachers, to think for a few minutes about the best homework assignment they have given in the past year, or if parents, think about the best assignment their child has received in the past year. ***Allow 1-2 minutes thinking time.***

3. Ask participants to introduce themselves to two other participants and share the qualities or characteristics that typify a high quality homework assignment. ***Allow 5 minutes.***

4. Refer participants to ***Activity Sheet #1*** where they can record the group's ideas. Chart and post responses of participants for all to see. Summarize the discussion by using ***T-2***, if these points have not already been made. (This list of characteristics is a composite of findings drawn from the research cited in the references about homework and is repeated below.)

Characteristics of High Quality Homework Assignments

(See bottom of Activity Sheet #1)

- Students know what they are to do and are able to complete the assignment successfully, e.g., about an 85 to 95% success rate.
- Students understand the purpose of the homework, e.g., review, independent practice, application of skills, preparation for next day's class work.
- The assignment is not too long and students are given adequate (flexible) time in which to complete it.
- The assignment uses information and materials that are readily available.
- The assignment reinforces and allows for practice of previously taught skills.
- The assignment is not just unfinished class work.
- Students find the assignment interesting, and it leads to further exploration and study.
- The assignment stimulates creativity and imagination in the application of skills.
- Students are encouraged to work together to complete assignments.
- The assignments stimulate home and class discussions about the topic.

5. Review workshop agenda, which has been posted, Purpose and Learner Objectives, using ***T-3 and T-4.***

E-8

Activity #2: Understanding some of the research on homework

Objective: To explain to participants some of the research on homework

Recommended Time: 20 minutes for both short and long versious of workshop

Directions and Procedures

1. State that for the next 15 minutes you want to discuss some of the research findings about homework and what schools are doing to ensure that homework is used to best advantage to extend the learning time of students. **Give the following mini-lecture.**

   a. **Importance of homework.** Point out that over the years, a number of studies have been conducted to evaluate the effects of homework on student learning. Unfortunately, many of these studies were not well designed (Cooper, 1989). However, when the studies are examined as a whole, homework is shown to have a positive impact on student learning. The impact is smallest at the elementary level but increases as students move through the grades, having the greatest impact on student learning in high school (Cooper, 1988; Win, 1985).

   One important finding about homework at the elementary level is that giving students regular homework assignments in elementary school positively impacts students persistence with and completion of homework in secondary school, where homework has the greatest effect on learning (Cooper, 1989). ***Use T-5***.

   Homework is most effective when it covers material already taught; however, giving an assignment on material that is taught the same day is not as effective as an assignment given to review and reinforce skills learned previously. Also homework is less effective if it is used to teach complex skills (Cooper, 1989).

   Homework is taken more seriously by students when teachers prepare written directions, discuss what is to be done with students, integrate the assignments with classroom instruction, and give a grade for homework (*What Works: Research about Teaching and Learning*, 1986).

   Walberg, et al. (1984) showed that "the assignment and grading of work done at home produces an effect on achievement that is three times as large as family socioeconomic status (as indexed by parental income, education, and occupation). Homework produces uniformly positive effects on the factual, conceptual, critical, and attitudinal aspects of learning" (1984, p. 399). ***Use T-6.***

   b. **Importance of reading as homework at the elementary grades.** Point out that elementary schools sometimes initiate home reading programs. Some of these programs are reading incentive programs that are organized by parent volunteers or the librarian. Other times kindergarten and first grade teachers specifically ask parents to read to their children.

Stress that several studies have shown that when parents are asked to read to their children or listen to their children read on a regular basis (regardless of the home language in which the reading occurs), children's reading achievement improves. (Cummins, 1986; Tizard, Schofield, Hewison, 1982; Toomey, 1986; Topping and Wolfendale, 1985). These studies indicate that regular reading assignments, with schools providing books for parent and child to read together, should not be overlooked as part of the homework routine at the elementary level. Obviously, teachers would like students to read on their own once they enter the upper elementary grades; however, teachers should consider structuring reading as part of the daily homework schedule. ***Use T-7***.

c. **Student time devoted to homework.** The amount of time spent by elementary school students varies from school to school and from district to district, depending on school and district policies. There has been no research establishing a correct or optimum amount of time that elementary students should spend on homework. Many district policies recommend 15 to 30 minutes at the primary grades, and 45 to 60 minutes in the upper grades. Cooper in his book on homework (1989) recommends up to 15 minutes one to three times a week for students in grade one-three, and 15 to 45 minutes two to four times a week for students in grades four - six; however, he presents no research to support these recommendations. A recent study in a large urban school district, reported that elementary students were spending more time on homework than typical school district plicy averages recommend (Clark, 1983).

Epstein and Becker (1982) found that most parents of elementary students supported their children in doing homework and made attempts to assist them when they had difficulty.
They also found that elementary students who are having difficulty with their class work spent more time on homework, but were often not able to complete assignments successfully. From her studies, Epstein also found that parents of these students spent considerable time helping their child with the assignments (1988). What do these findings mean?

- Students who are having difficulty with schoolwork, usually require more time to do the same homework assigned to other students who are doing well in school.

- Parents recognize their child is having difficulty, and they do what they can to help.

- Teachers often ask parents of students who are having difficulty to help.

- Many of these students are classified as "homework problems" by the teacher, who interprets the failure to complete homework as non-compliance or non-performance on homework.

- Students classified as "homework problems" often do not like to talk about school or homework, they get tense when doing homework and are more likely to be discipline problems. ***Use T-8.***

E-10

d. **Changes needed in elementary homework practices.** These findings indicate the need to rethink homework practices at the elementary grades and to find ways for "homework problems" to become "homework stars." One of the reasons the students may be having homework problems is that they are being given inappropriate assignments, especially assignments of uncompleted class work that has not been sufficiently mastered by the child to do independently at home.

e. **TV viewing in the elementary grades.** Similar to the high school pattern, television is still a problem for children in elementary and middle schools. The many hours spent watching television limits time available for other educational learning activities, such as reading, hobbies, sports, music, or club activities (*Guidelines for Family Television Viewing*, ERIC Digest EDO-PS-90-3). This is especially true in the large number of homes where children spend time alone between the end of school and 5:30 to 6:00 p. m. because their parent(s) are at work. In the Metropolitan Life Survey of teacher and parent attitudes, fifty-nine percent of the parents and sixty-two percent of the teachers agreed that children spend too much time home alone and that this was having a negative effect on student learning, especially through neglect of homework (Harris, Kagay, and Ross, 1987).

f. **What teachers can do about TV viewing.** Point out that teachers cannot control the amount of TV viewing; however, they can influence it. One school district implemented a schoolwide home reading incentive program, Books and Beyond (included in Home Learning Materials in Activity 5). Before initiating the program, the schools discussed TV viewing patterns with students and provided charts to record how much time students were watching TV. Students also discussed why they watched TV and what alternative activities they could do, such as reading.. As a result of this discussion and providing information to parents about the impact of so much TV watching, when the reading program was launched, parents reported in a follow-up survey that the amount of TV viewing declined, and the librarian reported the amount of books checked out increased (Topolovac, *Summary of Findings from Books and Beyond Implementation*, Solana Beach School District, Solana Beach, CA).

Note: If the longer version of this workshop is being conducted, there will be some time for comments and discussion of the research findings.

2. Close the activity by referring to the list of characteristics of quality homework generated by the group. Point out that in the next activity they will be examining some schoolwide actions that may help to increase the positive effects of homework.

Refer participants to ***Activity Sheet #2*** for a summary of key findings from research on homework. The studies listed on ***Activity Sheet #2*** can be found in reference list at the end of this guide.

267

E-11

Activity #3: Developing schoolwide homework guidelines and practices

Objectives:
1. To explain the importance of developing schoolwide homework guidelines;
2. To describe schoolwide supportive practices and homework systems that help families and increase homework success;
3. To identify roles and responsibilities of individual teachers in implementing homework guidelines and practices.

Recommended Time: 30 minutes, shorter version; 35 minutes longer version

Directions and Procedures

1. **District initiatives regarding homework.** Point out that many school districts have established district homework policies. Ask how many of the participants' districts have established homework policies? What has been the impact of the policies? Are the policies understood and supported by teachers, parents and students? How do they know (e.g., surveys have been done)?

2. **School guidelines and implementation needed.** Explain that while district policies are important, it is at the school building level that these policies are given meaning. The district policies need to be supplemented and reinforced by school level guidelines and procedures that ensure consistency among teachers. Parents and students are confused when one child's teacher regularly assigns homework and another one in the same school only occasionally gives homework, or when one child in third grade is assigned more homework than their child in fifth grade. Ask participants if their schools have school level guidelines and how these guidelines are implemented and monitored in their schools.

3. **Home and school conflicts about homework.** Stress that homework frequently creates tension between parent and child and home and school. On the 1987 Metropolitan Life Survey, 50% of parents and teachers agreed that parents neglect to see that children's homework is completed. Effective schools surveys conducted in San Diego County, CA, consistently showed that failure to turn in homework was a major complaint of many teachers. Parents, on the other hand, reported that the quality and quantity of homework was inadequate and that they and their children did not always understand how to do the assignments. If the potential of homework to increase student achievement and learning is to be realized, new schoolwide initiatives are needed that address both teacher and parental concerns about homework.

4. Point out that to strengthen homework as a learning tool and to build positive home-school relations in regard to homework, teachers, administrators, and parents need to work together to develop schoolwide guidelines and practices to support teachers and families. State that in the next 25 minutes you want participants to begin discussion of some of the key school level issues regarding homework.

a. Divide participants into groups of five or six. State that each group will examine a different school level homework issue. (***Note**: Decide in advance how you will divide groups and assign tasks, e.g., counting off and then giving each group an assignment. If you are conducting the shorter version of this workshop, consider diving participants into only two groups and doing two of the group activities. This will require less time for reporting from the groups. Choose the group activities that will best meet participants' needs. Note that in the Participant Workbook the directions for each group are given. Refer each group to the appropriate directions for them and to the appropriate Activity Sheets.*)

b. Refer each group to the assigned group activity description in the ***Participant Workbook, Activity Sheet #3*** (which is outlined below for ease of reference for the leader). State that each group needs to select a facilitator, a recorder, a reporter and time keeper. Give each group chart paper and felt pens or blank transparencies and pens to record ideas that will be shared with the total group. ***Allow 10 minutes.***

Group 1: Developing school level homework guidelines. The group's task is to review the homework guidelines and procedures in ***Activity Sheet #4***. Answer the following questions. 1) How do the six points presented in this "Procedure for Developing School Level Homework Guidelines" compare with your schools' policy, guidelines, and practices? 2) What actions have your schools taken or what needs to be done to implement each of these points? Be prepared to report ideas to the total group.

Group 2: Developing schoolwide practices to assist parents. The group's task is to brainstorm ways their schools are currently assisting parents. Review ***Activity Sheets #5-9*** in ***Participants' Workbook***. (***Note:** workshop leader may want to have the group examine only three or four of the sheets, if the shorter version of the workshop is being conducted.*)

Discuss how this information can help parents be more informed and supportive of homework. The following are some issues to consider. What other information might parents need and how could this information be shared? How are school and teacher homework expectations communicated to families? Be prepared to report ideas to the total group.

Some possible ideas to discuss are: 1) inform all parents of homework guidelines by printing them on homework folders, including them in student binders, providing them to parents at back to school nights, reviewing them during parent-teacher conferences, developing a video that explains them; 2) offer strategies on how parents can support homework policy through workshops, the school newsletters, and videos; 3) establish a homework telephone hotline where parents and students can call to find out about the homework assignments.

Group 3: Developing schoolwide practices to assist students. The group's task is to brainstorm ways their schools are currently assisting students to be more successful with homework. The following are some issues for the group to discuss. Which strategies have proved most successful? Do students know where to go or what to do for homework help? How do you know homework assignments are developmentally appropriate for each grade level? How is homework handled for non-English speaking students? Be prepared to report ideas to the total group.

Some ideas the group may want to consider are: 1) Provide a homework folder for primary children and a binder for upper grade students. 2) Provide a homework journal or calendar for students to write assignments and parents to use for comments and questions regarding homework (***Activity Sheet #10****, Elementary Assignment Calendar* ***and Activity Sheet #11****, Sample Page from Homework Diary*). 3) Provide a weekly homework packet which allows students to do homework at own pace during the week and weekend. 4) Teach students study and organizational skills. 5) Help students identify study buddies and groups and show them how to work together to complete homework assignments. 6) Establish an after school homework room for students that is staffed by teachers, parent volunteers or high school students. 7) Ask parents to volunteer their home for study hall for neighborhood children after school.

Group 4: Developing schoolwide practices to assist teachers. The group's task is to brainstorm strategies their schools are currently using to assist teachers to develop quality homework, evaluate homework procedures, and solve homework problems. The following are some issues to consider. How have the purposes of homework been clarified, defined? Do teachers share and communicate with each other about homework assignments? Are homework assignments developmentally appropriate? Is reading at home structured into the homework system? Are schoolwide homework problems discussed and solved at faculty or grade level meetings? ***Activity Sheet #12****, Critical Questions Regarding Homework*, summarizes some of the key issues that need to be resolved by the staff. Be prepared to report ideas to the total group.

Some ideas for the group to consider are: 1) Provide opportunities during the summer or other vacation periods for teachers in grade level teams to develop quality homework assignments. 2) Principal supervises, supports, and guides in implementing a consistent schoolwide homework plan. 3) Involve all concerned (teachers, parents, and students) in periodically evaluating homework (***Activity Sheet #13****, Homework Evaluation Questionnaire*).

c. Call on each group's report to share the group's ideas. ***Allow three minutes per group.***

5. Close the activity by reiterating the value of schoolwide homework guidelines and practices. Refer participants to ***Activity Sheet #14****, Ways to Strengthen Homework as a Learning Tool,* which summarizes some of the main points mentioned above.

Activity #4: Developing interactive home learning activities

Objectives:
1. To convert a traditional homework assignment into a more interactive assignment which involves family members
2. To explore models of interactive homework
3. To practice designing interactive homework

Recommended Time: 30 minutes, shorter version; 40 minutes, longer version

Directions and Procedures

(**Note:** *This next activity can be adapted to fit varying time schedules. In the shorter version of this workshop, teachers can be introduced to the concept of converting traditional assignments to more interactive homework activities that involve other family members. If more time is available, participants can practice developing their own TIPS or Parents Are Teachers Homework Sheets. In fact, one whole workshop could be devoted to this activity.*)

1. Explain that in the next activity participants are going to work to convert a traditional homework assignment into a more interactive one which involves students and their families working together.

2. Show ***T-9*** and refer participants to ***Activity Sheet #15,*** *Creating Interactive Homework Assignments.* As a total group, brainstorm ways in which assignment 1 could be designed to involve other family members. Write the suggestions on the transparency under the heading Family Interactive Assignment. (**Note:** *For this example, one possible interactive assignment would be to interview someone in the family or neighborhood who remembers the day President John F. Kennedy was killed. Ask them to tell you where they were and what they were doing, how people reacted, what they remember of the days immediately after the assassination and of the funeral.*)

   a. Divide participants in groups and have each group complete one of the other assignments. ***Allow 4-5 minutes.***

   b. Have each group share their ideas. Ask if others have additional ideas. ***Allow 5-8 minutes.***

3. Brainstorm as a total group, the advantages and disadvantages of such assignments and write group responses on a flip chart. After several minutes of brainstorming, some of the following questions can be posed to stimulate the group's discussion if these issues have not been raised. ***Use T-10,*** *Developing Interactive Assignments.* ***Allow 5-8 minutes.***

   a. Do interactive assignments meet some of the criteria of a high quality homework assignment? If yes, which ones; if not, why not?

E-15

b. How can interactive assignments help to create a more meaning-centered curriculum.

c. When participants (teachers) have used such assignments, what was the response of students, parents?

   d. When are such assignments appropriate or helpful?

   e. What, if any, are the problems teachers might encounter in creating such assignments?

   f. How should such assignments be counted, commented upon?

   g. What should be done if the student has no family member who can be involved?

4. Refer participants to ***Activity Sheets #16-18*** in the ***Participant Workbook***. Point out that these are examples of family oriented homework sheets. Have the group compare these sheets to some of the ideas they generated in converting traditional homework assignments. What would be the advantage of using such sheets as occasional homework? ***Allow 4-5 minutes for discussion***.

   a. Draw particular attention to the parent response form which is included as part of the ***TIPS Activity Sheet #17***. What would be the advantage of such a response form? Ask if other teachers occasionally solicit feedback on their homework assignments

   b. Point out that the TIPS Sheets and the Capistrano materials (***Activity Sheets # 16 and #17, T-11 and T-12***) were developed over the summer by teachers. In each case, the activities were closely linked to the school's curriculum. In the case of Capistrano, when the activity sheets were sent home on a regular basis, achievement rose in those classrooms.

   c. Discuss the home learning activity model ***PIP TRIPS, Activity Sheet #18*** (***T-13***) developed for kindergarten children by the San Francisco School Volunteers. To transport the materials from school to home, special boxes with handles were given to kindergarten children in the pilot schools. These boxes were sent home every other week with an activity sheets for child and parent to do together. Teachers used these special activities to supplement regular homework. Blank forms were also given to the teachers to develop their own PIP TRIPS to match and support a specific class curriculum focus. The response of parents and teachers to these materials was very positive after the first year of implementation, and the program is now being expanded to include children in the first grade.

d. If time permits, discuss some other materials that teachers might borrow or adapt to help them develop or design interactive homework ideas, e.g., the multitude of activity books found in book stores, grocery stores, and educational supply centers. Stress that it is important not to overwhelm parents with ideas of what they can or should do with their children. Activities that are sent home should follow the guidelines of other quality homework assignments, that is, the assignment should be doable with materials and resources readily available to the student and his or her family.

Note: If you are conducting the longer version of this workshop or are having a special session devoted to this topic, at this point divide participants into grade level teams to practice developing homework activities following either the TIPS or Capistrano model. Be sure to allow time for each grade level team to briefly share one or two ideas they have developed. You will need to have extra paper available for each group or develop a blank form using the headings from the TIPS and Parents Are Teachers,Too activity sheets for teachers to use in developing their home learning activities.

5. Close the activity by reminding participants that you have discussed and practiced developing one type of homework or home learning materials. These materials are best developed in grade level teams, although an individual teacher can use the models presented. To have schoolwide development and use of such materials, teachers need support from the site administrator or from the district. Curriculum development time is needed during the school year or over the summer. The development of materials such as the TIPS or Capistrano Parents Are Teachers, Too sheets can be done in stages focusing on one subject area at a time, or different schools could take different subject areas.

   In addition to developing family interactive homework, teachers also may need to review other homework assignments used for individual, independent practice to see if they meet the characteristics of good assignments discussed earlier, and if they are not causing "homework problems" for some students.

Activity #5: Exploring school level family learning programs

Objective: To be able to describe at least four family learning programs

Recommended Time: 10 minute, shorter version; 40 minutes, longer version

Directions and Procedures

1. **Defining family learning programs.** Point out that in addition to regular homework, schools can also do much to extend and reinforce the family learning environment. The workshop on *Families as Learning Environments* will be helpful to teachers and administrators in reviewing the strengths of families from different cultural, ethnic, and linguistic backgrounds.

    a. Stress that the purpose of family learning programs is distinct from homework in that parents and children are helped to learn together first at school before practicing the skills at home. Parents are given ideas and materials that foster and enrich learning opportunities at home. Teachers can reinforce these home learning activities by integrating them into classroom lessons and activities, encouraging students to share at school what they are doing at home, and by providing more parents the opportunity to participate at home by describing some of the activities in school and class newsletters.

    b. Review the importance of administrative commitment and support in organizing schoolwide home learning programs. Some of the administrative responsibilities are:
        1) Endorsement of the programs through allocation of resources—money, time, personnel, space.
        2) Recruitment of parents and staff to conduct training (it is best if both are involved).
        3) Personal involvement in at least some of the programs.
        4) Recognition and reinforcement of staff, parents, and students who participate.

2. **For shorter version of this workshop,** simply refer participants to ***Activity Sheets #19 through #23.*** State that participants can read these program descriptions at their own leisure. Point out that a contact person is listed for each program, if participants desire more information about the programs.

    To close the activity at this point, refer participants to ***Activity Sheet #24, Have you tried to . . .?*** which gives some useful tips on how to increase family attendance when workshops are held.

3. **For the longer version of this workshop,** divide participants into groups of five. Inform the groups that they are going to do a modified jigsaw activity. ***Use T-14*** to give instructions for the activity. Each member of the group will read one of the program descriptions, thus becoming the expert for the group. After each participant has read the description, he or she is to share in one to two minutes the key elements

of the program. Each person should try *to sell* the rest of the group on the program and its benefits. After each group has discussed these programs, participants should share any additional schoolwide home learning activities that they have tried. ***Allow 20 minutes for reading and discussing of the programs.***

a. Program descriptions are provided as ***Activity Sheets #19-23*** in ***Participant Workbook***
   1) Family Math
   2) Family Science
   3) Family Reading
   4) Books and Beyond
   5) Home Computer Programs/Family Writing

4.3 **Closing the activity.** After each group member has shared his or her expertise, call participants back together. Ask participants to share with the whole group any other schoolwide home learning programs which they have conducted at their schools.

Stress that systematically organizing family learning opportunities will give families the tools for promoting learning at home. The impact of these programs, however, will be far greater if they are linked to classroom instruction. For example, in implementing the Family Reading Program, teachers could read the books to the students in the class. The librarian or media specialist could select other books that represent the genre being taught in the Family Reading Workshops. Teachers could ask children who are reading the books at home to share their reactions to the books in class. Similar classroom connections can be made with any of the other programs. When these connections are made, the impact of the program will be far greater than if the workshops are conducted as isolated events.

Conclude this activity by sharing some of the following actions that need to be taken to increase active family participation in workshops held at school, *Strategies for Conducting Successful Family Learning Workshops, **T-15:***

a. Make extensive and repeated efforts to recruit families using a variety of techniques.
b. Make follow-up phone calls after an announcement of the workshop is sent home.
c. Provide translations, transportation, and child care, as needed.
d. Target particular groups or grade levels, e.g., Family Math organized for first through third grade families, and then for fourth through sixth graders and their parents, Family Reading sessions held for k-2 parents, a Computer Night for fifth and sixth grade families. Targeting grade levels makes recruitment easier and may better meet parent and student needs.
e. Connect the family learning workshops with the regular classroom curriculum.
f. Make arrangements for students, whose family cannot attend, to join another family for the activity or to experience the learning opportunity with a parent or community volunteer during the school day.

Refer participants to ***Activity Sheet #24, Have You Tried to . . .? (T-16)*** which suggests several tips for effectively recruiting participants for family workshops.

Activity #6: Taking the Next Steps

Objective: To identify several next steps which need to be taken to strengthen schoolwide homework guidelines and practices and to develop more home learning activities and programs

Recommended Time: Omit in shorter version; 40 minutes in longer version

Directions and Procedures

1. Point out that to implement ideas learned in this workshop will require planning as well as possibly learning new skills. Ask participants what additional information and support they may need to implement some of the ideas presented in the workshop?

2. Briefly present the following points about how the school might go about developing an action plan to strengthen homework and home learning. ***Use T-17. Allow 5-10 minutes for discussion.***

Strategies to Use In Developing an Action Plan

a. Form a task group of parents, teachers, principal, community members, if one does not already exist, to review current homework guidelines and practices.

b. Use parent and teacher surveys to identify action priorities and training / informational needs, for example, use the ***Homework Evaluation Questionnaire*** (***Activity Sheet #13***) to solicit parent input on homework.

c. Review the material learned at this workshop as well as school data about the school's current homework guidelines and practices. Information should be based on any recent parent, teacher, or student surveys.

d. Use data about current practices, decide which areas need to be strengthened, for example, identify current rate of return on homework and set an improvement target.

e. Develop a plan of action. The plan should fit with other school priorities. For example, if the school is focusing on implementing a literature-based reading program, home learning programs and activities should also address this theme. If hands-on science is the year's focus, again, develop a variety of programs and approaches that will help parents reinforce this in-school curriculum in the home.

f. Celebrate small gains and changes in homework practices and home learning activities.

g. Evaluate the impact of efforts on parents, student and teachers.

h. Set new goals each year and recognize that developing high quality homework and home learning activities is an ongoing process.

3. State that now participants will have some time to reflect on what has been learned at this workshop and begin developing a plan of action. (***Note:** if participants are not sitting with other school team member, have them regroup into school teams.*)

   Refer participants to ***Activity Sheet #25*** . Ask each person individually to complete the worksheet. ***Allow 10 minutes***.

   Give each team another copy of ***Activity Sheet #25***. Then ask participants to share their ideas with other team members and work together to develop a common group plan. If participants are attending the workshop without others from their school, have participants form groups of three and share and discuss each other's action plans. In this way, each participant will leave the workshop having had an opportunity for feedback about their action plan. ***Allow 15-20 minutes.***

4. Close the activity by asking each participant or group to share one next step the group will take after the workshop and one problem or block which will have to be overcome. ***(Note**: If the group will be returning in the near future for the next workshop, encourage them to bring a progress report on their action steps to the workshop.)*

Activity #7: Summary and Conclusion

Objective: To have all participants evaluate the usefulness of the workshop

Recommended Time: 10 minutes, shorter version; 15 minutes, longer version

Directions and Procedures

1. Conclude by reviewing the key concept and purpose of the workshop. Review objectives and how the activities addressed the objectives.

   Points to cover:

   - Families provide critical learning environments for children, and children spend much of their waking hours in families and their communities. However, teachers through good homework practices and assignments can influence and shape the home learning environment and extend the learning time beyond the classroom.
   - Regular and consistent homework, especially reading, influences children's school achievement.
   - Home learning programs, such as reviewed in this workshop, can give parents vital tools for stimulating learning at home.
   - In developing new homework guidelines, practices and assignments, teachers need to be sensitive to the cultural differences of their students and to develop assignments which allow students to express their diversity and cultural heritage.
   - To maximize the benefits of high quality homework and home learning activities, will require a concerted effort on the part of the school staff.
   - While most families will support the school in its new homework initiatives, the school may need to create safety nets so that no child will be discriminated against if the family is unable to support the child (e.g., through establishing a homework center, using volunteers to assist children, developing peer helpers to be homework coaches).

2. Refer participants to ***Activity Sheet #26, Homework and Home Learning Resources for Teachers and Families***. This list of annotated resources will be good ones to add to the school and classroom libraries.

3. Workshop evaluation and closing.

   Close by asking if there are any final questions, thanking participants for their hard work, and asking participants to complete the ***Workshop Evaluation Form***.

References

California State PTA (1991) *Parents Empowering Parents*. Los Angeles, CA: California State PTA.

Canter, L. (1989). *Homework Without Tears*. Santa Monica, CA: Lee Canter Associates.

Caplan, N. Choy, M. H., and Whitmore, J. K. (1992). Indochinese refugee families and academic achievement. *Scientific American*, ( ), 36-42.

Chrispeels, J., Boruta, M., and Daugherty, M. (1988). *Communicating with Parents*. San Diego, CA: San Diego County Office of Education.

Clark, R. (1983) *Family life and school achievement: Why poor black children succeed or fail*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

Clark, R. (1993). Homework-focused parenting practices that positively affect children's achievement. In N. F. Chavkin (Ed.), *Families and schools in a pluralistic society*. Albany, N.Y.: SUNY Press.

Copper, H. (1989). Homework. New York: Longman.

Cummins, J. (1986). Empowering minority students: A framework for intervention. *Harvard Educational Review*, 56(1),18-36.

Epstein, J. L. (1988). *Homework practices, achievements, and behaviors of elementary school students*. Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University, Center for Research on Elementary and Middle Schools.

Epstein, J. L. and Becker, H. J. (1982a). A survey of teacher practices. *Elementary School Journal*, 83(3).

Epstein J. L. and Becker, H. J. (1982b). Teacher practices of parent involvement: Problems and possibilities. Report #324. Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University, Center for Social Organization of Schools.

Epstein, J. L. and Dauber, S. L. (1989b). *Teacher's attitudes and practices of parent involvement in inner-city elementary and middle schools*. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University, Center for Research on Elementary and Middle Schools.

Guidelines for Family Television Viewing, ERIC Digest EDO-PS-90-3).

E-23

Harris, L., Kagay, M., Ross, J. (1987). Metropolitan Life survey of the American teacher: Strengthening links between home and school. New York: Louis Harris and Associates.

Lareau, A. and Benson, C. (1984). The economics of home/school relationships: A cautionary note. Phi Delta Kappan, 65(6), 401-404.

Topolovac, E. (1988). *Summary of Findings from Books and Beyond Implementation*, Solana Beach School District, Solana Beach, CA).

Topping, K. and Wolfendale, S. (Eds.). (1985). Parental involvement in children's reading. Beckenham, England: Croon Helm.

Tizard, J., Schofield, W.N., and Hewison, J. (1982). Collaboration Between Teachers and Parents in Assisting Children's Reading, British Journal of Educational Psychology, 52 (1) 1-11.

Walberg, H. J. (1984, February). Families as partners in educational productivity. Phi Delta Kappan, 66 (2), 397-400.

Walberg, H. J., Paschal, R. A., and Weinstein, T. (1985). Homework's powerful effects on learning. Educational Leadership, 42(7), 76-79.

U. S. Department of Education. (1986). *What Works: Research About Teaching and Learning*. Washington, DC: Government Printing Office.

E-24

WORKSHOP LEADERS EVALUATION FORM

Building Home-School Partnerships for Learning

Leader's Name: ______________________________ Date Given: _____

Name of Workshop: ____________________ Amount of Time Used: ____

School District: ________________________________ State: _____

1. What was the most successful aspect of this workshop? Why?

2. What was the least successful? Why?

3. Did you change or cut out any parts of this workshop? If yes (a) which parts, b) what changes did you make, and (c) why did you change or cut them?

4. If this workshop is revised, what should be changed about:
   a. instructions in leader's guide

   b. workbook materials

   c. times allotted to activities

5. Other comments? Please continue on other side.

Thank you for giving us your thoughts on your experience with this workshop. May we have your phone number in case we need further information? Phone: ___________________

E-25

LEADER'S SUMMARY OF PARTICIPANT EVALUATION FORMS

Leader's Name: ______________________________

Name of Workshop: ____________________________ Date Given: _____

School(s): _________________________________ District: __________

Estimate number of participants: male _____ and female _____

Estimate number who were
_____ African American
_____ White
_____ Hispanic
_____ Asian American
_____ other (specify) ____________________________

Participants in this workshop consisted of (check all that apply):

_____ staff from a single school
_____ staff from several different schools within one school district
_____ staff from schools in several school districts
_____ school district officials and/or staff
_____ others: (specify) ______________________________________

Please summarize the last question from the Participant Evaluation Form by entering the total number of:

_____ K-3 grade teachers
_____ 4-6 grade teachers
_____ principals
_____ other school site professionals
_____ school district officials and/or staff members
_____ parents
_____ others

On a blank form please list all themes that are repeated across participants on the open-ended questions. (Read answers to one question at a time to detect common themes.) If your time does not permit this, we will summarize this information. It is more important to get all the forms back quickly.

Please send us this form, your own Leader's Evaluation Form, and all Participant Evaluation Forms. Mail to:

Oliver Moles, Project Director
Office of Research, OERI, U.S. Department of Education
555 New Jersey Ave., NW
Washington, DC 20208-5649 Phone: (202) 219-2211

E-26

Homework and Home Learning Activities for Students and Their Families

Transparency Masters

Table of Contents

Transparency	Title
T-1	Key Concept
T-2	Characteristics of Good Homework Assignments (2 pages)
T-3	Workshop Purpose
T-4	Learner Objectives
T-5	Key Findings About the Impact of Homework on Student Achievement
T-6	Key Findings
T-7	Key Findings
T-8	Key Findings
T-9	Creating Interactive Homework Assignments
T-10	Developing Interactive Homework: Key Questions
T-11	Capistrano, Parents are Teachers Too
T-12	TIPS (2 pages)
T-13	PIP TRIPS (2 pages)
T-14	Directions for Modified Jigsaw Activity
T-15	Strategies for Conducting Successful Family Learning Workshops
T-16	Have You Tried to . . .? (2 pages)
T-17	Strategies to Use in Developing a Plan of Action

KEY CONCEPT

Families are more likely to reinforce and extend classroom instruction at home when teachers:

- **give high quality homework assignments;**
- **provide home learning ideas and materials;**
- **guide families in how to help.**

E-28

T-2

Characteristics of Good Homework Assignments

- **Students know what they are to do and are able to complete assignments successfully.**

- **Assignments are not too long.**

- **Students are given a flexible time frame in which to complete assignments (e.g., the weekend).**

- **Assignments use information and materials that are readily available.**

- **Assignments reinforce and allow practice of previously taught skills.**

E-29

T-2 (continued)

Characteristics of Good Homework Assignments

- **Assignments are not just unfinished class work.**
- **Students find assignments interesting and they lead to further exploration and study.**
- **Assignments stimulate creativity and imagination in the application of skills.**
- **Students are encouraged to work together to complete assignments.**
- **Assignments stimulate home and class discussions about the topic.**

E-30

T-3

Purpose

The purpose of this workshop is to assist school staff (principals and teachers) to:

- **develop coherent schoolwide homework guidelines and practices;**
- **implement high quality homework and home learning activities; and**
- **offer home learning programs that engage families and extend children's learning time away from school.**

T-4

LEARNER OBJECTIVES

By the end of this workshop, participants will:

1. **Define the qualities of good homework assignments;**
2. **Understand the research on homework and home learning;**
3. **Define the roles and responsibility of school, grade level teams, and individual teachers in regard to homework and home learning activities;**
4. **Know how to modify homework assignments to include family interaction;**
5. **Describe at least four family learning programs (longer version only); and**
6. **Develop a plan of action in regard to homework and home learning (longer version only).**

T-5

Key Findings About the Impact of Homework on Student Learning

- **Homework that is well-designed and commented upon has a positive impact on student learning** (Cooper, 1989; Walberg, Paschal, and Weinstein, 1985).

- **The impact of homework is smallest at the elementary level and greatest at the high school level** (Cooper, 1989).

- **Giving regular homework assignments in elementary school positively impacts student persistence with and completion of homework in secondary schools** (Cooper, 1989).

- **Homework is most effective if used to reinforce already learned skills.**

E -33

T-6

Key Findings About the Impact of Homework on Student Learning

- **Homework is taken more seriously by students when teachers prepare written directions, discuss what is to be done, integrate the assignments with classroom instruction, and give a grade for homework** **(What Works: Research about Teaching and Learning, 1986).**

- **"The assignment and grading of homework done at home produces an effect on achievement that is three times as large as family socioeconomic status, as indexed by parental income, education, and occupation"** **(Walberg, 1984, p. 399).**

- **Students who perform well on national assessment tests spend more time on homework.**

T-7

Key Findings About the Impact of Homework on Student Learning

- **Asking parents to read to their children or listen to their children read positively effects student reading achievement** **(Cummins, 1986; Tizard, Schofield, Hewison, 1982; Toomey, 1986; Topping and Wolfendale, 1985).**

- **Teachers should consider structuring reading as part of the daily homework schedule, especially for students in upper elementary grades.**

E-35

T-8

Time Spent on Homework in Elementary Grades

Elementary students who are having difficulty with class work often also have difficulty with homework, spend more time on homework and parents offer more help **(Epstein, 1988).**

- **Students who are having difficulty with schoolwork, usually require more time and help.**
- **Parents recognize their child is having difficulty and try to help.**
- **Teachers often ask parents of students who are having difficulty to help.**
- **Many of these students are classified as "homework problems" by the teacher.**

T-9

Creating Interactive Homework Assignments

Directions: Rewrite the assignments below to be more interactive and involve family members or friends.

Original Independent Assignment	Family Interactive Assignment
Read the chapter about the Kennedy Presidency and answer the questions.	Read the chapter about the Kennedy Presidency and...

E-37

T-10

Developing Interactive Assignments: Key Questions

a. Do interactive assignments meet some of the criteria of a high quality homework assignment? If yes, which ones; if not, why not?

b. How can interactive assignments help to create a more meaning-centered curriculum.

c. When teachers use such assignments, what are the responses of students, parents?

d. When are such assignments appropriate or helpful?

e. What problems might be encountered in creating such assignments?

f. How should such assignments be counted, commented upon?

g. What should be done if the student has no family member who can be involved?

E-38

CAPISTRANO UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT
San Juan Capistrano, California

Subject Science

Grade Level 4th

Parents Are Teachers Too
(PATT)

Living Things

Skill Things That Affect Plant Behavior

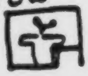
Did You Know? Plants need water, air, light to grow.

Plant roots grow down because of the pull of the earth on certain chemicals in the root. Chemicals in the stem make it grow up.

Try It Yourself Experiment: What will happen if a plant doesn't get water or air or light?

A. Place 6 identical plants in 6 identical pots. Group in pairs
B. Water one – don't water the other.
C. Leave one in the light – put other in a paper bag.
D. Leave one in the open air – seal the other in an airtight plastic bag. (Suck the air out with a straw)
E. Record the results every 2 or 3 days for 2 or 3 weeks. Write your conclusions.

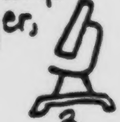
Going Beyond Experiment #1: Will a plant grow towards the light?



A. Place a plant in a box with a hole cut in it.
B. Place them on a window sill.
C. Record what happens.

Experiment #2 A. Place 2 identical plants in an identical environment. B. Place one on its side. C. Record your observations daily D. Does the plant know whats up?

Experiment #3 A. Soak bean seeds overnight. B. Sprout seeds between jar wall and crumpled damp paper towels. C. When roots are an inch or longer, turn the jar upside down. D. Record what happens to the root and shoot.



T-12A

E-39

SAMPLE -- TIPS SCIENCE GRADE 3

Student's Name: ______________________________ Date: ______________

LIVING THINGS -- THE IMPORTANCE OF ANIMALS

Dear Parent or Guardian,

We are learning to identify useful products from animals. This activity will help build science skills in observing, recording information, and drawing conclusions. I hope you enjoy this activity with me. This assignment is due ____________________.

Sincerely,

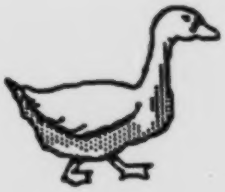
____

OBJECTIVE: To identify useful products from animals and to draw conclusions about the importance of animals in our lives.

MATERIALS: pen or pencil

PROCEDURE:

1. Discuss with your family member different kinds of products that come from animals. Write a list of these products at the top of the Lab Report.
2. Observe objects in your living room, bedroom, and kitchen. In the kitchen, make sure to look in the refrigerator and cupboards.
3. Record on the Lab Report the items that were made from animals or animal products.
4. Next to each item on the Lab Report, write the animal the item is made from.
5. Read your list of animal products to your family member. Write any additions that are suggested by your family member to your list.



T-12B

LAB REPORT

1. Write a list of products that you think are made from animals.

____________ ____________ ____________ ____________
____________ ____________ ____________ ____________
____________ ____________ ____________ ____________

2. Fill in the animal products you found and the animals the items are made from.

Room	Items made from animals or animal products	Which animal?
Living Room	1. 2. 3.	1. 2. 3.
Bedroom	1. 2. 3.	1. 2. 3.
Kitchen	1. 2. 3.	1. 2. 3.

CONCLUSIONS: Discuss the following questions with your family member. Write complete sentences.

1. Which animal gave the most food products to your home? ____________
____
2. Which animal gave the most non-food items to your home? ____________
____
3. Which animal do you think is the most important to people? Why? ____________
____

HOME-TO-SCHOOL COMMUNICATION:

Dear Parent,

Please give me your reactions to your child's work on this activity.

Write YES or NO for each statement.

______ 1. My child understood the homework and was able to discuss it.
______ 2. My child and I enjoyed the activity.
______ 3. This assignment helped me know what my child is learning in science.

Any other comments: ______________________________

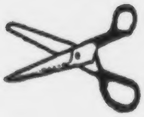
Parent Signature ______________________________

From: Epstein, J.L. and Salinas, K.C. (1992). Manual for Teachers: TIPS Math and Science Interactive Homework in the Elementary Grades. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Center on Families, Communities, Schools and Children's Learning.

Reprinted with permission.

SAN FRANCISCO SCHOOL VOLUNTEERS

65 Battery Street, Third Floor
San Francisco, CA 94111
(415) 274-0250



PIPTRIP: Our Special Box

Dear Parents,

Inside the PIPTRIP box are some supplies. Use these with your child to decorate your box in any you wish. You may want to :

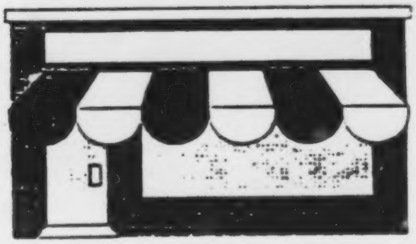
- color the suitcase with the crayons
- cut magazine pictures out and paste them on
- paste on family photos
- paste on silly words or cartoons
- use "found" objects--things around the house like pieces of ribbon, wrapping paper, labels from cans or bottles
- do whatever you feel is fun and pretty!

The Parent Involvement Project of San Francisco School Volunteers is funded through the generosity of Citibank, the Koret Foundation, and The Roberts Foundation.

T-13B

E-42

65 Battery Street, Third Floor
San Francisco, CA 94111
(415) 274-0250



PIPTRIP: To the Market We Go

Dear Parents,

During your next trip to the market, take your kindergarten child along. This is a good time to be together, and it is also a good time to help your child learn about words, colors, and numbers. You might do one of these:

- As you walk through the aisles, ask your child to look for things that are the same color (example: "Look for red things"; on another day, "Look for green things.").
- Ask your child to count out fruits or vegetables as they're put into the bag.
- Point to various items and ask your child to name them.
- Ask your child to find the "biggest" vegetable--also the smallest.
- Ask your child to find something round, something square, something rectangle.

The Parent Involvement Project of San Francisco School Volunteers is funded through the generosity of Citibank, the Koret Foundation, and The Roberts Foundation.

E-43

T-14

Modified Jigsaw Directions

1. Select a group facilitator.

2. Inn a group of 5, assign a different Family Learning Program to each person.

3. Read the assigned description independently. Be prepared to *sell* the program to your group in a one to two minute presentation.

4. Each person presents their program to the group.

5. As a group, discuss key attributes of programs and reactions to them.

6. If time permits, discuss other family learning programs that any group member has tried.

Strategies for Conducting Successful Family Learning Workshops

a. Make extensive and repeated efforts to recruit families using a variety of techniques.

b. Make follow-up phone calls after an announcement of the workshop is sent home.

c. Provide translations, transportation, and child care.

d. Target particular groups or grade levels.

e. Connect the family learning workshops with the regular classroom curriculum.

f. Make arrangements for students whose family cannot attend.

T-16

Have you tried to . . . ?

- Offer programs that meet the needs of all parents.
- Involve a cross-section of parents in planning activities.
- Publicize meetings in a variety of ways.
- Provide adequate advance notice.
- Send timely follow-up reminders.
- Get teachers and students involved.
- Target a particular group of parents. Provide interpreters.

E-46

Have you tried to . . . ?

- Have handouts available in different languages.
- Schedule meetings at times most convenient to parents.
- Set up a telephone tree.
- Provide child care and/or involve children in the program.
- Provide transportation.
- Have door prizes.
- Serve refreshments.
- Evaluate meetings. Make improvements a PRIORITY!

E-47

T-17

Strategies for Developing an Action Plan

a. Form a task group of parents, teachers, and principals.

b. Use parent, student, and teacher surveys to identify action priorities, training, and informational needs.

c. Review the material learned at this workshop and other school data.

d. Use data about current homework practices to set priorities.

e. Develop a plan of action.

f. Celebrate small gains and changes in homework practices and home learning activities.

g. Evaluate the impact of efforts on parents, students, and teachers.

h. Set new goals each year.

E-48

Building Home-School Partnerships for Learning: Workshops for Urban Educators (Pilot Version)

Homework and Home Learning Activities

Participant Workbook

Table of Contents

Overview and Rationale
    Key Concept, Purpose, and Learner Objectives

Activity Sheet Number and Title

1 Characteristics of High Quality Homework Assignments
2 Key Findings About the Impact of Homework on Student Learning
3 Group Assignments: Developing Schoolwide Guidelines and Practices to Assist Teachers and Families
4 Procedures for Developing a School Level Homework Guidelines
5 Homework Letter
6 Sample Letter Regarding Help With Spelling
7 Sample Letter Regarding How Parents Will Be Kept Informed About Homework and Class Lessons
8 Homework Contract
9 Parent Tips
10 Elementary Assignment Calendar
11 Sample Page from Homework Diary.
12 Critical Questions Regarding Homework
13 Homework Evaluation Questionnaire
14 Ways to Strengthen Homework as a Learning Tool.
15 Creating Interactive Homework Assignments
16 Parents are Teachers Too
17 TIPS Program
18 PIP TRIPS
19 Family Math
20 Family Science
21 Family Reading
22 Books and Beyond
23 Family Computing
24 Have You Tried To . . .?
25 Next Steps Planning Sheet
26 Homework and Home Learning Resources for Teachers and Families

Participant Evaluation Form

E-49

Overview

KEY CONCEPT

Families are more likely to reinforce and extend classroom instruction at home when teachers give high quality homework assignments, provide home learning ideas and materials, and guide families in how to help.

RATIONALE AND PURPOSE

Research has shown that homework given in the elementary grades is an important means of extending children's learning time and building positive study habits which benefit students throughout their academic careers. Teachers' practices critically influence the amount and type of learning activities in which parents engage with their children (Epstein and Becker 1982 a and b; and Epstein and Dauber, 1988). Therefore, teachers need to develop homework assignments that are interesting and appropriate for students. In addition, the school staff needs to become aware of school and classroom factors which promote and hinder parents' involvement in their children's learning at home and work to enhance the promoting factors and eliminate the hindering factors.

Research has also shown that families differ in their approach and ability to assist their children with homework and to engage in home learning activities (Caplan, Choy, and Whitmore, 1992; Clark, 1983; Clark, 1992; Lareau and Benson, 1984). Because of these differences, schools and teachers need to take a more active, coherent, and consistent approach to homework. In addition, teachers need to provide guidance and support to families in ways that will reinforce and enhance family learning practices.

The purpose of this workshop is to assist school staff (principal and teachers) in developing coherent schoolwide homework guidelines, practices, and high quality homework, and in implementing home learning programs that engage families and extend children's learning time away from school.

LEARNER OBJECTIVES

By the end of this workshop, participants will be able to:

1. Define the characteristics of high quality homework assignments;
2. Understand the research on homework and home learning;
3. Define the roles and responsibility of school, grade level teams, and individual teachers in regard to homework and home learning activities;
4. Know how to modify homework assignments to include family and / or community interaction.
5. Describe at least four family learning programs (objective achievable only in longer workshop version);
6. Develop a plan of action in regard to homework and home learning (objective achievable only in longer workshop version).

E-50

Activity Sheet #1

Characteristics of High Quality Homework Assignments

Characteristics of the best assignment given:

Some Points to Consider:

- Students know what they are to do and are able to complete the assignment successfully (e.g., about an 85 to 95% success rate).
- Students understand the purpose of the homework, e.g., review, independent practice, application of skills, preparation for next day's class work.
- The assignment is not too long, and students are given adequate (flexible) time in which to complete it, e.g., weekends are included to give working families more time.
- The assignment uses information and materials that are readily available.
- The assignment reinforces and allows for practice of previously taught skills.
- The assignment is not just unfinished class work.
- Students find the assignment interesting and it leads to further exploration and study.
- The assignment stimulates creativity and imagination in the application of skills.
- Students are encouraged to work together to complete assignments.
- The assignments stimulate home and class discussions about the topic.

E-51

Activity Sheet #2

Key Findings About the Impact of Homework on Student Learning

- Homework that is well-designed and commented upon has a positive impact on student learning (Cooper, 1989; Walberg, Paschal, and Weinstein, 1985).

- The impact of homework is smallest at the elementary level and greatest at the high school level (Cooper, 1989).

- Giving regular homework assignments in elementary school, positively impacts student persistence with and completion of homework in secondary schools (Cooper, 1989).

- Homework is most effective if used to reinforce already learned skills in previous weeks or months.

- Homework is taken more seriously by students when teachers prepare written directions, discuss what is to be done, integrate the assignments with classroom instruction, and give a grade for homework (What Works: Research about Teaching and Learning, 1986).

- "The assignment and grading of homework done at home produces an effect on achievement that is three times as large as family socioeconomic status, as indexed by parental income, education, and occupation" (Walberg, 1984,p.399).

Reading as Homework

- Asking parents to read to their children or listen to their children read, regardless of the language in which the reading occurs, positively effects student reading achievement (Cummins, 1986; Tizard, Schofield, Hewison, 1982; Toomey, 1986; Topping and Wolfendale, 1985).

- Teachers should consider structuring reading as part of the daily homework schedule, especially for students in upper elementary grades.

Time Spent on Homework in Elementary Grades

- Unlike secondary students, elementary students who are having difficulty spend more time on homework and parents offer more help (Epstein, 1988).

- Students who are having difficulty with schoolwork, usually require more time to do the same homework assigned to other students.

- Parents recognize their child is having difficulty and try to help.

- Teachers often ask parents of students who are having difficulty to help.

- Many of these students are classified as "homework problems" by the teacher who interpret the failure to complete homework as non-compliance or non-performance on homework.

- Students classified as "homework problems" often do not like to talk about school or homework, they get tense when doing homework and are more likely to be discipline problems.

E-52

Activity Sheet #3

Group Assignments

Group 1: Developing school level homework guidelines. The group's task is to review the homework guidelines and procedures in ***Activity Sheet #4***. Answer the following questions: 1) How do the six points presented in this "Procedure for Developing School Level Homework Guidelines" compare with your schools' policy, guidelines, and practices? 2) What actions have your schools taken or need to be taken to implement each of these points? Be prepared to report ideas to the total group.

Group 2: Developing schoolwide practices to assist parents. The group's task is to brainstorm ways their schools are currently assisting parents. Review ***Activity Sheets #5-9*** in ***Participants' Workbook***. Discuss how this information can help parents be more informed and supportive of homework. The following are some issues to consider. What other information might parents need and how could this information be shared? How are school and teacher homework expectations communicated to families? Be prepared to report ideas to the total group.

Some possible ideas to discuss are: 1) inform all parents of homework guidelines by printing them on homework folders, including them in student binders, providing them to parents at back to school nights, reviewing them during parent-teacher conferences, developing a video that explains them; 2) offer strategies on how parents can support homework policy through workshops, the school newsletters, and videos; 3) establish a homework telephone hotline where parents and students can call to find out about the homework assignments.

Group 3: Developing schoolwide practices to assist students. The group's task is to brainstorm ways their schools are currently assisting students to be more successful with homework. The following are some issues for the group to discuss. Which strategies have proved most successful? Do students know where to go or what to do for homework help? How do you know homework assignments are developmentally appropriate for each grade level? How is homework handled for non-English speaking students? Be prepared to report ideas to the total group.

Some ideas the group may want to consider are: 1) Provide a homework folder for primary children and a binder for upper grade students. 2) Provide a homework journal or calendar for students to write assignments and parents to use for comments and questions regarding homework (***Activity Sheet #10**, Elementary Assignment Calendar and* ***Activity Sheet #11**, Sample Page from Homework Diary*). 3) Provide a weekly homework packet which allows students to do homework at own pace during the week and weekend. 4) Teach students study and organizational skills. 5) Help students identify study buddies and groups and show them how to work together to complete homework assignments. 6) Establish an after school homework room for students that is staffed by teachers, parent volunteers or high school students. 7) Ask parents to volunteer their home for study hall for neighborhood children after school.

E-53

Activity Sheet #3a

Group Assignments

Group 4: Developing schoolwide practices to assist teachers. The group's task is to brainstorm strategies their schools are currently using to assist teachers to develop quality homework, evaluate homework procedures, and solve homework problems. The following are some issues to consider. How have the purposes of homework been clarified, defined? Do teachers share and communicate with each other about homework assignments? Are homework assignments developmentally appropriate? Is reading at home structured into the homework system? Are schoolwide homework problems discussed and solved at faculty or grade level meetings? ***Activity Sheet #12, Critical Questions Regarding Homework***, summarizes some of the key issues that need to be resolved by the staff. Be prepared to report ideas to the total group.

Some ideas for the group to consider are: 1) Provide opportunities during the summer or other vacation periods for teachers in grade level teams to develop quality homework assignments. 2) Principal supervises, supports, and guides in implementing a consistent schoolwide homework plan. 3) Involve all concerned (teachers, parents, and students) in periodically evaluating homework ***(Activity Sheet #13, Homework Evaluation Questionnaire).***

Activity Sheet #4

Procedure for Developing School Level Homework Guidelines

In order for school and home to make useful and reasonable extension of the child's opportunities for learning, guidelines, which reflects the cooperative nature of homework, should be developed at each school. These guidelines, however, should be flexible enough in its application to meet the diversity of situations in typical school and home life. The following procedure is suggested in developing school level homework guidelines:

A. SELECT A COMMITTEE TO DEVELOP GUIDELINES

Ideally, definite, clear-cut guidelines on homework should be developed by the principal, teacher-representatives, parent representatives, and where appropriate, student representatives. Input from the entire staff should be considered and suggestions from the broader parent community should be sought. The school guidelines need to conform with district level homework policy, if one exists.

B. ESTABLISH GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

One of the first tasks of the committee is to review the research on homework and to agree upon the purposes for assigning homework. When the purposes have been agreed upon, these purposes should give direction to the homework guidelines by suggesting goals and objectives that will be addressed in the guidelines.

From the parents' point of view it often appears that the children, when they are not in school, spend a disproportionate amount of time with things of little consequence. It would seem logical, then, to propose that the work of the school extend into these after school hours. Homework can be an appropriate way to extend the learning time, enable children to develop independence and personal responsibility.

C. DECIDE A TIME SCHEDULE

Sound homework guidelines will ensure that children are not overburdened with homework assignments. It is evident that there is no single time schedule that will be suitable for all schools or even the same school over a period of time. Even so, in developing homework guidelines, the committee may wish to consider what many authorities believe to be a maximum total time allotment suitable for the majority of youngsters, assuming the other criteria for sound homework assignments have been met.

Primary Grades	(1-3)	Max.	45 minutes per day
Upper Elementary	(4-6)	Max.	60 minutes per day
Junior High		Max.	90 minutes per day

D. EMPHASIZE THE NEED FOR EVALUATION

Knowing that homework is a teaching rather than a testing process, homework guidelines must always reflect the need for checking or evaluating the finished product. Naturally each check-up will vary, but at least one of four approaches need to be used:

1) recognize pupil's efforts and make comments about the finished work;
2) allow students to share what has been done with others;
3) make students aware of the strengths and weaknesses of their efforts;
4) develop an appraisal system so that students can make their own comparative evaluations.

Activity Sheet #4 continued

E. MAKE DECISIONS CONCERNING GRADING

Reward for homework should be predetermined and decisions concerning grades or rewards would be shared with both parents and students. It is not uncommon for parents and students to be told at reporting time that the child's low-grade or failure is due to incomplete homework assignments. This is too late in the process.

Many educators agree that if students are required to do homework, they should be rewarded for their efforts. However, it is suggested that homework efforts count toward a moderate portion of the overall grade. If rewards are too high, or undue value is placed on the home assignment, unhealthy practices could result.

F. COMMUNICATE GUIDELINES

A key factor in the effectiveness of homework is home-school communications. At all levels and especially at the elementary level, **it is imperative that the guidelines be given to parents in writing**. The homework guidelines should be reviewed regularly with teachers, parents, and students. When all concerned know exactly what is expected, homework can both a powerful learning tool and a rewarding experience as students see themselves mastering new skills.

Adapted from and reprinted with permission from Information and Guidelines for Developing a Homework Policy, Caddo Parish Schools, Shreveport LA 1981.

E-51

Activity Sheet #5

Sample Homework Letter to Parents (Elementary)

Dear Parents,

Homework is very important to your child's success in school. The teacher will send home assignments four days a week. Kindergarten through third grade students should spend about 15 to 30 minutes a day on homework. Fourth through sixth grade students should spend 30 to 45 minutes a day. You can help your child be successful with homework and avoid homework hassles by using some of the following suggestions and tips.

1. Help your child establish a regular time and place for doing homework.
2. Turn off the TV when it is family homework time.
3. Try to have a quiet time and place with good lighting for doing homework: the kitchen table is fine.
4. Ask to see your child's homework folder or assignment calendar each day. Talk about what your child is learning in school
5. Make suggestions in a positive way such as, "The teacher will understand your ideas better if you write in your best handwriting."
6. Ask your child to explain what he or she is to do. Often talking through an assignment will help the child to understand what is to be done.
7. If your child is stuck, ask him or her to write a question that they would ask their teacher. Sometimes by writing or thinking of questions to ask about what is not understood, your child will be able to solve the problem.
8. Contact the teacher by phone, note, or in person when your child is having trouble with homework assignments. Don't fight with your child about homework.
9. Help your child get and complete make-up assignments when he or she is absent. Call the school and ask for assignments.
10. Help with assignments by checking for completeness, neatness, and accuracy.
11. Establish a place where completed homework is placed (for example, by the front door in a box) so that it won't be forgotten when your child leaves for school.

Be positive. Encourage and praise your child's efforts.

With your support and help, I know your child will have a successful year.

Sincerely,

E-57

Activity Sheet #6

Sample Letter Regarding Help With Spelling

Dear ________________,

Parents often ask how they can help their children.

____________________ needs your help at home in learning weekly spelling words. He/she will bring home the current list of 20 words to master by Friday's final test. Please go over them together, Monday through Thursday.

Spending this additional time practicing the spelling words, I am sure, will result in more success on the Friday tests.

Thank you for your help,

____

Please sign and return.

____

Parent Comments and Suggestions ______________

____

____

____

____

Activity Sheet # 7

Sample Letter Regarding How Parents Will Be Kept Informed About Homework and Class Lessons

Dear Parents:

Attached is a copy of my lesson plans for the week. It tells you what I will be teaching each week, as well as homework assignments and current events assignments. From now until June, I will send these home so that you will be able to follow what is going on in your child's class.

Under COMMENTS, this week I have included a list of abbreviations I will be using. Usually, I will use this space to let you know of long-range projects, field trips, etc.

You will notice the TEAR OFF AND RETURN portion at the bottom of the lesson plan. There is space for your comments. Please sign and return this with your child tomorrow. I will be keeping these for my records to know that you received my weekly lesson plan..

Please come Thursday evening to Room 12 at 6:30 p.m. The principal and I want to share and discuss ideas on how we can communicate better with you. We will be available to answer questions. The P.T.A. Founders' Day Meeting follows at 7:00 p.m.

I will be interested to have your comments on my lesson plan now or during Parent Conferences, the week of March 11-15.

Thanks,

(teacher's name)

Adapted from Ocean Knoll School, Encinitas CA

E-59

Activity Sheet #8

Homework Contract

____
Date

I promise to complete my homework each day. If I have a problem, I will write a question about what I do not understand and bring it to school the next day for help.

____
Student Signature

Check a square each day homework is completed and returned.

Class	**Monday**	**Tuesday**	**Wednesday**	**Thursday**	**Friday**

As the parent, I promise to provide a quiet place for my child to study free from the distractions of TV and telephone. When my child is stuck, I will help him/her review the questions or problems and provide support and encouragement. I will call or contact the teacher, if my child is having problems doing the homework.

____
Parent Signature

As the teacher, I promise to give assignments that will provide opportunities for independent practice of skills taught in class, provide clear directions, and give comments on the homework as soon as possible.

____
Teacher Signature

Activity Sheet #9

HOMEWORK TIPS FOR PARENTS

HOW CAN I HELP MY CHILD WITH HIS/HER HOMEWORK?
Show that you are interested in what your child is learning in school:

- Look at the assignments that your child is completing
- Examine completed work that your child brings home from school.
- PRAISE YOUR CHILD FOR HIS/HER EFFORTS AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS.
- Display particularly good papers in your home.
- Be tolerant of homework not being done perfectly - your child is learning many new skills that are not perfected yet.

HOW CAN WE AVOID THE "HOMEWORK HASSLES"?

Problem 1: My child says that he/she doesn't have homework, but the teacher says that homework is not being turned in.

★ A note will come home when homework is not assigned.

Problem 2: Occasionally the work my child brings home is too difficult and I am not sure how to teach it to my child.

★ Homework should be material that has been taught in class. Your child should be familiar with the assignment before it comes home.

★ You are not expected to introduce new material to your child.

★ Write a note on the paper and send it back to school.

Problem 3: I have other things to do, I can't spend 30 minutes to an hour with my child.

★ Fine. Get your child started on his/her homework.

★ Check back in 10-15 minutes to be sure that he/she is still working.

★ When all work is done, check for completion - PRAISE your child for his/her effort.

Problem 4: My child will simply NOT do his/her homework.

★ Please contact your child's teacher so you can discuss a possible plan of action.

Problem 5: What if my child is consistently working longer than the suggested time?

★ Please communicate this concern to your child's teacher so you can discuss possible causes and solutions.

Reprinted with permission from Cuyamaca Elementary Model Education Center, El Cajon, California

Elementary Assignment Calendar

Student Name__________________		Parent (Signature)_______________			Teacher (Signature) _______________	
Subject	**Monday** **Date** ________	**Tuesday** **Date** ________	**Wednesday** **Date** ________	**Thursday** **Date** ________	**Friday** **Date** ________	**Teacher Comments**
Reading						__ Work Completed __ Outstanding Work __ Good Citizenship __ Work Improving __ Creative Work __ Homework Missing __ Tardy to Class __ Careless Work __ Disruptive Behavior __ Please call
Language Arts						__ Work Completed __ Outstanding Work __ Good Citizenship __ Work Improving __ Creative Work __ Homework Missing __ Tardy to Class __ Careless Work __ Disruptive Behavior __ Please call
Spelling						__ Work Completed __ Outstanding Work __ Good Citizenship __ Work Improving __ Creative Work __ Homework Missing __ Tardy to Class __ Careless Work __ Disruptive Behavior __ Please call

Activity Sheet #10

E-61

Elementary Assignment Calendar

Student Name________________ Parent (Signature)______________ Teacher (Signature) ________________

Subject	Monday Date ________	Tuesday Date ________	Wednesday Date ________	Thursday Date ________	Friday Date ________	Teacher Comments
Math						__ Work Completed on Time __ Outstanding Work __ Good Citizenship __ Work Improving __ Creative Work __ Homework Missing __ Tardy to Class __ Careless Work __ Disruptive Behavior __ Please call
Social Studies or Science						__ Work Completed on Time __ Outstanding Work __ Good Citizenship __ Work Improving __ Creative Work __ Homework Missing __ Tardy to Class __ Careless Work __ Disruptive Behavior __ Please call
Parent or Student Comments						**Parent Comment** __ Assignment Unclear __ Child Needs More Help __ Too Much Work __ Not Enough Work __ Child Enjoying Work __ Class is stimulating __ Please Call

Activity Sheet #10a

E-62

E-63

Activity Sheet #11

Student Daily Homework Diary

Date	Date Due	Date Completed	Parent's Initials
Math			
Reading			
Language Arts			
Spelling			
Social Studies			
Health/Science			
Subject			
Subject			

Date	Date Due	Date Completed	Parent's Initials
Math			
Reading			
Language Arts			
Spelling			
Social Studies			
Health/Science			
Subject			
Subject			

Activity Sheet #12

Critical Questions Regarding Homework

Districts and schools have begun to recognize the importance of homework and have initiated district and school homework guidelines, assignment calendars, homework hotlines and study centers. However, there are a number of critical questions that need to be answered by the school staff, such as:

1. What constitutes a good homework assignment?
2. Does the homework assignment provide for successful independent practice by the student?
3. If the student is non-English speaking, is the homework in the language of the student?
4. Are students able to complete homework assignments with an 85% to 90% success rate? (Research indicates that to be effective, students, especially in the elementary grades, need to be able to complete assignments with this success rate. This means that uncompleted class work may be inappropriate, especially if the student did not complete it because he/she did not understand and the work.)
5. For elementary students are at least 15 minutes of reading included as part of daily homework assignments?
6. Are parental and student expectations made clear and communicated regularly?
7. Are assignments appropriate in nature and duration based on the grade level of students?
8. Do teachers share and communicate with each other about homework assignments?
9. Do parents and students know where to go for homework help?
10. Are schoolwide homework problems discussed and solved (e.g., developing and implementing a consistent homework policy, providing workshops for teachers and parents to help them address homework concerns, developing schoolwide systems such as homework folders and assignment calendars)?

E-65

Activity Sheet #13

Homework Evaluation Questionnaire

Dear Parents:

Help us evaluate our homework guidelines. We need to know what you think. We are asking your children to do homework four nights a week for 20-30 minutes if they are in grades kindergarten through third, or 30-45 minutes if in grades fourth through sixth.

Please take a few minutes to answer these questions. We will share the results in our next newsletter so you will know what other parents are thinking, too. The classes with the most surveys returned will receive a treat. You may complete a survey for each child you have in school.

____________ Grade level of child

1. My child spends about ______________ minutes each night on homework.

2 I think this amount is _____ too little, ______ about right, _____ too much, _____don't know.

3. My child usually understands what he or she is to do for homework?_______ yes ________ no

4. My child is usually able to complete most homework assignments by him or herself?
_______ never _______ sometimes _______ always

5. My child accepts doing most homework assignments?
_______ yes _____ no _____ don't know

6. Getting my child to do or complete homework assignments is a problem?
___________never, ___________ sometimes, ___________ always.

7. My child needs more help with homework than I can provide?
__________ never, ____________ sometimes, __________ always.

8. I am satisfied with the type of homework my child is assigned? ________ yes ________ no

9. I think my child's homework assignments are helping to develop my child's independent study skills?
_____ yes ______ no ________ don't know

10. I would attend a workshop on how to help my child with homework?
_______ yes _____ no

11. I would like suggestions of games, books or other learning activities to do with my child?
_______ yes _____ no

12. Suggestions and ideas I have about homework I want to share with the teachers:

____

____

____

Activity Sheet #14

Ways to Strengthen Homework as a Learning Tool

The following are a list of ways that schools can strengthen homework as a learning tool.

1) Involve parents and teachers in developing schoolwide homework guidelines (***Activity Sheet #4***).

2) Inform all parents of the guidelines by printing them on homework folders, including them in student binders, providing them to parents at back to school nights, reviewing them during parent-teacher conferences and sending individual class letters to parents about homework (***Activity Sheets #5-9***).

3) Ask parents, students and teachers to sign a homework contract that defines the obligations of each person (***Activity Sheet #8***).

4) Provide a homework folder for primary children and a binder for upper grade students.

5) Provide a homework journal or calendar for students to write assignments and parents to use for comments and questions regarding homework (**Activity Sheets #10 and #11**)

6) Teach students study and organizational skills.

7) Help students identify study buddies and groups and show them how to work together to complete homework assignments.

6) Provide opportunities for parents to learn how to assist with homework by offering workshops, sharing tips in the school newsletters, (**Activity Sheets # 9**), developing videos to demonstrate homework help strategies, and establishing homework hotlines.

7) Establish an after school homework room for students that is staffed by teachers, parent volunteers or high school students.

8) Ask parents to volunteer their home for study hall for neighborhood children after school.

9) Provide opportunities for teachers in grade level teams to develop quality homework assignments that provide for independent practice and extended learning opportunities.

10) Provide principal supervision, support, and guidance in implementing a consistent schoolwide homework plan.

11) Periodically discuss some of the critical questions about homework outlined in ***Activity Sheet #12***.

16) Involve all concerned (teachers, parents, and students) in periodically evaluating the homework (***Activity Sheet #13***).

These Activity Sheets have been drawn from Chrispeels, Boruta, and Daugherty, (1988) *Communicating with Parents* San Diego County Office of Education, San Diego, CA , and from(1991) *Parents Empowering Parents*, (Los Angeles CA: California State Parents-Teachers-Association.

E-67

Activity Sheet #15

Creating Interactive Homework Assignments

Directions: Rewrite the assignments below to be more interactive and involve family members or friends.

Original Independent Assignment	Family Interactive Assignment
1. Read the chapter about the Kennedy Presidency and answer the questions.	Read the chapter about the Kennedy Presidency and . . .
2. Do problems 1,3,5,7 on measurement, using both English and metric units.	
3. Complete the questions on the worksheet about weather.	
4. Write ten sentences using this week's spelling words. (Or read the story on pages ______ in your reader and answer the questions.)	

Activity Sheet #16

Subject Science

Grade Level 4th

CAPISTRANO UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT
San Juan Capistrano, California

Parents Are Teachers Too
(PATT)

Living Things

Skill

Things That Affect Plant Behavior

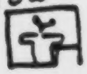
Did You Know? Plants need water, air, light to grow.

Plant roots grow down because of the pull of the earth on certain chemicals in the root. Chemicals in the stem make it grow up.

Try It Yourself! Experiment: What will happen if a plant doesn't get water or air or light?

A. Place 6 identical plants in 6 identical pots. Group in pairs
B. Water one – don't water the other.
C. Leave one in the light – put other in a paper bag.
D. Leave one in the open air – seal the other in an airtight plastic bag. (Suck the air out with a straw)
E. Record the results every 2 or 3 days for 2 or 3 weeks. Write your conclusions.

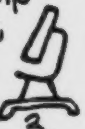
Going Beyond Experiment #1: Will a plant grow towards the light?



A. Place a plant in a box with a hole cut in it.
B. Place them on a window sill.
C. Record what happens.

Experiment #2 A. Place 2 identical plants in an identical environment. B. Place one on its side. C. Record your observations daily D. Does the plant know whats up?

Experiment #3 A. Soak bean seeds overnight. B. Sprout seeds between jar wall and crumpled damp paper towels. C. When roots are an inch or longer, turn the jar upside down. D. Record what happens to the root and shoot.



E-69

Activity Sheet #17

TEACHERS INVOLVE PARENTS IN SCHOOLWORK (TIPS): INVOLVING FAMILIES TO IMPROVE STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

Joyce L. Epstein

WHY BUILD SCHOOL AND FAMILY PARTNERSHIPS?

If enough studies show the same result, you begin to believe it. That is how it is with school and family partnerships. Research shows that parent involvement improves student achievement, attitudes, homework, report card grades, and aspirations. Surveys of parents show that most families want to be able to talk with, monitor, encourage, and guide their children as students, but they say they need more information from the schools about how to help their children at home.

Studies also show that when teachers guide involvement and interaction, more parents become involved in ways that benefit their children. For example, when teachers frequently use practices to involve families in reading, students gain more in reading than do similar students whose teachers do not involve families. This suggests an important connection between parent involvement in particular subjects and student success in those subjects. It also shows the important roles teachers play in helping families become involved in schoolwork at home.

There are other benefits to school and family partnerships. When parents are assisted by the schools, they become more aware of their children's education and they interact with their children more. Children see that their parents and teachers communicate. They become more aware that they can talk to someone at home about schoolwork and school decisions.

Based on research that links teachers' practices of involving families with more success for students, we developed a process that enables teachers to do this easily: TIPS -- Teachers Involve Parents in Schoolwork. There are two TIPS processes -- one that increases parent involvement *at home* on interactive homework assignments, and one that increases parent involvement *at school* as volunteers.

FAMILY INVOLVEMENT AT HOME: TIPS INTERACTIVE HOMEWORK IN MATH, SCIENCE & HEALTH, AND LANGUAGE ARTS

Of all the types of involvement, the one that more parents want to know about is: **How do I help my own child at home?** This request is at the top of parents' wish lists, as they want to do their part to help their children succeed in school each year. This most wanted involvement is one that schools often have had difficulty organizing. It requires every teacher at every grade level to communicate with families about how to work and interact with their children on learning at home.

To meet this need, teachers helped to design, implement, and test a process called Teachers Involve Parents in Schoolwork (TIPS) for interactive homework. With TIPS, any teacher can help all families stay informed and involved in their children 's learning activities at home. With TIPS, students complete homework that should promote their success in school.

TIPS activities are **homework assignments that require students to talk to someone at home about something interesting that they are learning in class.** TIPS helps solve some important problems with homework. It enables all families to become involved, not just those who already know how to discuss math, science, or other subjects. The homework is the students' responsibility; parents are not asked to "teach" subjects or skills. TIPS requires students to share their work, ideas, and progress with their families. It asks families to comment on their children's work and to request other information from teachers in a section for home-to-school communications. With TIPS, homework becomes a three-way partnership involving students, families, and teachers.

One immediate result of this is that families recognize and appreciate the efforts of teachers to keep them informed and involved. The TIPS activities keep school on the agenda at home so that children know that their families believe schoolwork is important and worth talking about.

E-70

Activity Sheet #17a

OVERCOMING OBSTACLES

Jump hurdle 1: Homework should NOT always be done alone.

Some teachers believe that all homework should be completed in a quiet place, away from the family or other people. Its purpose is to allow students to practice what was taught in class, to study for a quiz, or to complete other work *on their own*. While SOME homework is for these purposes, OTHER homework should fulfill other goals. TIPS homework -- once a week in math or language arts, twice a month in science -- is designed specifically to keep students and their families talking about schoolwork at home. More than quarterly report cards, or lists of required skills, or other occasional explanations, TIPS brings school home on a regular schedule of homework that requires children to talk with their parents and other family members.

Jump hurdle 2: Just any homework won't do.

Some homework is pretty boring; it requires students' time, but not much thinking. TIPS activities must be challenging and engaging -- the type of homework that students will want to explain and share with their families. TIPS includes higher level thinking skills and interactions with family members that make students think, write, gather information, collect suggestions, explain, demonstrate, draw, sketch or construct things, and conduct other interactive activities with parents and other family members at home.

WHAT ARE TIPS ACTIVITIES?

TIPS prototype activities are examples that teachers can use to design homework that matches the learning objectives for their students. There are TIPS prototype activities in math, science & health, and language arts.

TIPS MATH provides a format for students to share what they are learning about a specific math skill. The TIPS format allows students to show parents exactly how they learned a skill in class. Then, they complete regular math homework activities, and obtain reactions from parents. TIPS Math emphasizes the mastery of math skills -- basic and advanced. The activities may include challenges in games or other extensions of skills, or finding examples of the specific math skill in real life. TIPS Math homework should be assigned once a week to keep students and families talking about math at home on a regular schedule.

TIPS SCIENCE and HEALTH provides a format for students to conduct and discuss a hands-on "lab" or data collection activity related to the science topics they study in class. In health, TIPS requires students to discuss topics, gather reactions, or collect data from family members on issues of health and student development. The hands-on science activities and interactive health assignments help students and their families see that these subjects are enjoyable, enriching, and part of every day life.

In science, it is important that TIPS activities require only inexpensive or no-cost materials that are readily available at home. Special equipment, if it is ever needed, should be provided by the school. The TIPS Science and Health activities include a brief letter to parents explaining the topic. Then, the activities outline objectives, materials, space for lab reports or data charts, challenges, discussion questions, conclusions, and home-to-school communications. TIPS Science and Health homework should be assigned on a regular schedule (e.g., once a week or twice a month) to keep students and families discovering and talking about science and health at home.

TIPS LANGUAGE ARTS provides a format for students to share a variety of skills in writing, reading, thinking, grammar, and related language activities. The students do the work -- reading and writing -- but students and parents enjoy thinking together, discussing, sharing, and exchanging ideas. Family members may listen to what their children write, help students edit their writing, think about words, react to writing, provide ideas, memories, and their own experiences, and other interactions. TIPS Language Arts homework should be assigned once a week or every other week to keep families aware of and involved in students' work and progress in language arts.

Some of the examples may be useful just as they are. But, because homework must match the teachers' learning objectives, most teachers will use the examples to help them design their own TIPS activities. After several years of development, TIPS now can be easily adopted or adapted. Teachers who see the activities usually say, "I can do that!" That is exactly the reaction that will help every teacher in every grade level and every subject design interactive homework for their students and families.

In Carl S. Hyman (Ed.) The School-Community Cookbook: Recipes for Successful Projects in the Schools (forthcoming).

Activity Sheet #17b

E-71

SAMPLE -- TIPS SCIENCE GRADE 6

S6-9

Name: ______________________ Class: __________ Date: ____________

LIVING IN WATER -- FRESH AND SALT WATER MIXTURES

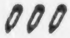
Dear Parent or Guardian,

We are observing what happens when salt water meets fresh water. This is an activity that will help build science skills in observing, predicting, and drawing conclusions. I hope you enjoy this activity with me. This assignment is due ______________________.

Sincerely,

____

OBJECTIVE: To test and describe what happens when fresh water is mixed with salt water.

MATERIALS: 2 same sized glasses half filled with water. Let them stand overnight.
4 teaspoons of salt colored markers or crayons 
1 teaspoon of grape juice, other dark juice, or several drops of food coloring

LAB REPORT

PROCEDURE:

1. Predict what will happen when salt water is mixed with fresh water. ______________________
____

2. Place the two glasses of fresh water on a table or counter.

3. Put 4 teaspoons of salt in one glass and stir until the salt is dissolved.

4. To color the salt water, add one teaspoon of juice or several drops of food coloring. Stir the mixture until it is evenly colored. Color ONLY the salt water.

5. Draw below the two glasses as they appear when you begin the activity.

FRESH WATER	SALT WATER

Activity Sheet #17c

E-72

6. Now, pour **half** of the **salt water SLOWLY** into the fresh water. **CAUTION:** Do not mix or shake the glass you have just added the salt water to.

7. Wait ONE MINUTE. Observe the glass from the side.

8. Draw a picture of the salt water and the fresh water after they are mixed together.

SALT WATER INTO FRESH WATER MIXTURE

CONCLUSIONS: Explain the experiment to your family member and discuss your conclusions together. Write complete sentences. **Who is working with you?** ____________

1. Based on your observation, write a statement that describes what happens when salt water and fresh water are mixed.

2. Why do you think you got the results that you did?

3. What do you think would happen if you **poured the fresh water into the salt water?**

4. **TRY THIS!** Start again with clean materials and use the same procedures as before. This time **color the fresh water** and pour half of it into the salt water. Report what you observe.

HOME-TO-SCHOOL COMMUNICATION:

Dear Parent,

Please give me your reactions to your child's work on this activity.

Write YES or NO for each statement.

______ 1. My child understood the homework and was able to discuss it.
______ 2. My child and I enjoyed the activity.
______ 3. This assignment helped me know what my child is learning in science.

Any other comments: ______________________________

Parent Signature ______________________________

Activity Sheet #18

E-73

65 Battery Street, Third Floor
San Francisco, CA 94111
(415) 274-0250

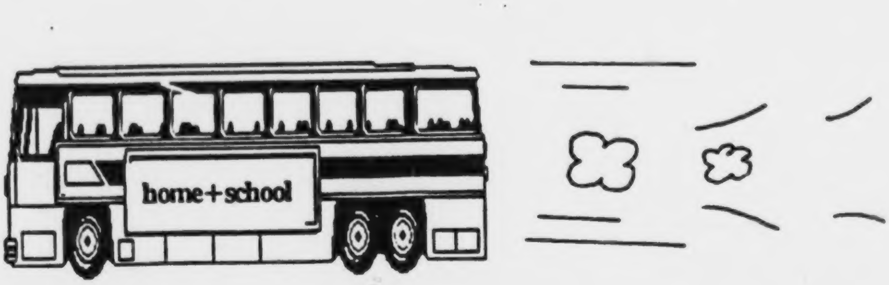
Parent Involvement Project

The Parent Involvement Project of the San Francisco School Volunteers will provide you, as parents of kindergartners, with ways you can help your children at home by working with them on simple, enjoyable activities. The activities will come home regularly in a PIP(Parent Involvement Project)TRIP box.

Sometimes the activity can be done with materials in the box; other times, the activity can be done with simple things around you.

The teacher will tell your child when the boxes go home and when they are to be brought back to school. We hope that sometimes you'll come in and share with the teacher how the activity went.

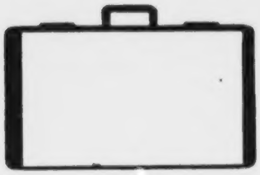
Try to put aside a special time for your PIPTRIP activity. Have fun!

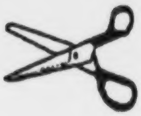


The Parent Involvement Project of San Francisco School Volunteers is funded through the generosity of Citibank, the Koret Foundation, and The Roberts Foundation.

Activity Sheet #18a

65 Battery Street, Third Floor
San Francisco, CA 94111
(415) 274-0250





PIPTRIP: Our Special Box

Dear Parents,

Inside the PIPTRIP box are some supplies. Use these with your child to decorate your box in any you wish. You may want to :

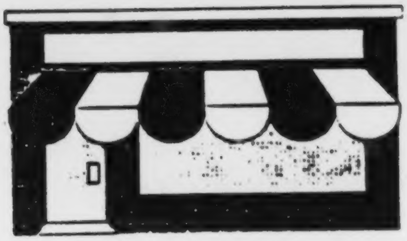
- color the suitcase with the crayons
- cut magazine pictures out and paste them on
- paste on family photos
- paste on silly words or cartoons
- use "found" objects--things around the house like pieces of ribbon, wrapping paper, labels from cans or bottles
- do whatever you feel is fun and pretty!

The Parent Involvement Project of San Francisco School Volunteers is funded through the generosity of Citibank, the Koret Foundation, and The Roberts Foundation.

Activity Sheet #18b

E-75

65 Battery Street, Third Floor
San Francisco, CA 94111
(415) 274-0250



PIPTRIP: To the Market We Go

Dear Parents,

During your next trip to the market, take your kindergarten child along. This is a good time to be together, and it is also a good time to help your child learn about words, colors, and numbers. You might do one of these:

- As you walk through the aisles, ask your child to look for things that are the same color (example: "Look for red things"; on another day, "Look for green things.").
- Ask your child to count out fruits or vegetables as they're put into the bag.
- Point to various items and ask your child to name them.
- Ask your child to find the "biggest" vegetable--also the smallest.
- Ask your child to find something round, something square, something rectangle.

The Parent Involvement Project of San Francisco School Volunteers is funded through the generosity of Citibank, the Koret Foundation, and The Roberts Foundation.

E-76

Activity Sheet #19

FAMILY MATH

Contact
Virginia Thompson
FAMILY MATH or MATEMÁTICA PARA LA FAMILIA
Lawrence Hall of Science, University of California,
Berkeley, CA 94720
(415) 642-1823

What is FAMILY MATH?

FAMILY MATH is a way for parents and children to enjoy doing mathematics together. Many parents would like to help their children with math but don't know how to begin or what to do. FAMILY MATH developed from the efforts of the EQUALS project at the Lawrence Hall of Science at the University of California, Berkeley. In working with teachers to help them improve the teaching and learning of mathematics in the classrooms, the EQUALS staff discovered that the teachers also wanted ideas and materials for parents to use at home. Thus, the creation of a separate program: FAMILY MATH.

A typical FAMILY MATH course consists of six or eight, one and a half to two hour, sessions. Each session gives parents and children (kindergarten through grade eight) opportunities to develop problem-solving skills and to build an understanding of mathematics through hands-on activities. The focus on problem-solving is in line with changes in the national standards for mathematics education and with new approaches that being used in classroom mathematics instruction.

What does FAMILY MATH hope to achieve?

FAMILY MATH hopes to help parents and their students, especially girls and students from diverse ethnic and low-income families, overcome their math phobias and recognize that all students need good math skills. The classes are designed to make learning math fun and relevant to the lives of students. The program is also designed to give parents and children an opportunity to learn together in a supportive and relax atmosphere with other families. FAMILY MATH also provides parents with easy ways they can reinforce math skills as they go about daily activities in their home.

How can FAMILY MATH be started?

There are two ways the program can be initiated. One approach is to purchase the FAMILY MATH book from the FAMILY MATH program. The book, available in both English and Spanish, provides an introduction to the program, descriptions of the activities for each type of mathematics, as well as an appendix on how to organize the classes.

A second approach is to send a team of teachers and parents (or a community volunteer) to a training session. Contact the EQUALS project to find out who in your region or state has been trained and could conduct such a training. The two day training enables parents and teachers to experience the fun of family math activities, to develop learning materials to take home and use in their own classes, and to plan the first two FAMILY MATH classes.

Activity Sheet #19a

How much does the FAMILY MATH program cost?
The FAMILY MATH book cost $15.00. Some additional funds would be needed for supplies to conduct the hands-on activities (e.g. beads, blocks, measurement tools), but these costs are not high. There is also a 17 minute film showing scenes from several FAMILY MATH classes available in both English and Spanish. It provides full instructions and activities for parents and their children to do at home or in class as well as information on how to set up a FAMILY MATH course. If a training session is organized, some additional costs would be involved. The San Diego County Office of Education which has been sponsoring trainer of trainers sessions for several years charges $60 per participant. This charge includes a copy of the FAMILY MATH book.

How should FAMILY MATH classes be organized?
FAMILY MATH classes are usually taught by grade levels (k-2, 3-4; 5-6; 7-9), although variations occur depending on size of the school and staff available to conduct sessions. A typical class lasts about one and a half to two hours. Usually four to six classes are offered. Topics included in most classes are arithmetic, geometry, probability and statistics, measurement, estimation, and logical thinking. These are all concepts covered throughout the K-8 curriculum. Stimulating and fun mathematics activities are used to address each of these topics.

Parents in FAMILY MATH classes are also given overviews of the mathematics topics at their children's grade levels and explanations of how these topics relate to each other. In addition, men and women working in math-based careers and occupations come to FAMILY MATH classes to talk about how math is used in their jobs. Career activities used in FAMILY MATH also help families to see the importance of children acquiring a good foundation in math at each grade level.

How can the program be linked to the school curriculum and classrooms?

- Teachers can use some of the FAMILY MATH activities in class.
- Students who have attended the FAMILY MATH classes could be asked to share them with classmates.
- Teachers can send home FAMILY MATH activities as an occasional home learning assignment.
- Teachers can take responsibility for contacting parents of students in their class and personally inviting them to attend FAMILY MATH classes.
- FAMILY MATH activities can be shared as part of a home visit program.
- FAMILY MATH puzzles or activities can be published in the school newsletter.
- Parents who attend FAMILY MATH classes can be invited to class to conduct math activities with the whole class.
- Guest speakers at FAMILY MATH classes can also be invited to make presentations to classes at school.

Activity Sheet #20

Family Science

Contact:
Peggy Noone
Northwest EQUALS Project
PSU/OCE
P.O. Box 1491
Portland, OR 97207
(503) 725-3045

What is FAMILY SCIENCE?

FAMILY SCIENCE is an innovative program designed to teach science skills by having children and parents learn and enjoy science together. The program seeks to increase the study of science by all students, but especially among female and minority students.

The program was modeled after the highly successful FAMILY MATH program developed by the EQUALS project at the Lawrence Hall of Science. The development of FAMILY SCIENCE was funded by a three-year, $325,000 grant from Chevron to the Northwest EQUALS of Portland Oregon. Major partners in the creation of the program were the National Urban Coalition of Washington, D.C., an organization of community-based groups dedicated to educating urban minority youth, and the national EQUALS program at the Lawrence Hall of Science in Berkeley, California.

The program consists of a series of four to six classes for parents and their children that are held at a convenient location such as at school, in a community center or a church. Family involvement is key to the FAMILY SCIENCE program.

The program has activities appropriate for students grades kindergarten through eighth grade and children of different grade levels can be accommodated in one workshop.

What does FAMILY SCIENCE hope to achieve?

The goal of FAMILY SCIENCE is to develop science skills in a new generation of American students. The program seeks to demonstrate the relevance of science to a student's future, and improve a child's self-image as a learner of science. The program utilizes imaginative hands-on learning activities to stimulate student interest in science. These activities, which used easy-to-find and inexpensive materials from around the home, will supplement the school science curriculum.

How can the program be started?

The best way to initiate FAMILY SCIENCE is to ask the district or a regional resource center to sponsor the two-day, ten hour FAMILY SCIENCE training workshop, and to send a team of parents and teachers to the workshop.

If it is not possible to organize a training in your area, contact the FAMILY SCIENCE project and purchase the FAMILY SCIENCE book. By spending time studying the examples in the book and selecting appropriate activities, teachers and parents, who feel comfortable with science, should be able to host the FAMILY SCIENCE classes or workshops.

E-79

Activity Sheet #20a

How much does the program cost?

The FAMILY SCIENCE book will sell for approximately $20 when it is available in 1992. It can be ordered from any of the EQUALS affiliates and will be distributed through several educational catalogues. A training will cost $1000 for 12-20 participants, plus the cost of the books, travel and per diem expenses for the trainer. Schools would also need to budget a small amount of money for supplies and funds to cover the costs of stipends or substitute time for teachers to attend the training and conduct the workshops.

How should the FAMILY SCIENCE sessions be organized?

It is best to plan a series of four to six workshops, inviting families to come with their children. Approximately 12 to 15 families, depending on the number of siblings who attend, is an ideal number for two workshop leaders to coordinate. This allows time for interaction and discussion of experiments and time for families to get to know each other. The sessions have been successfully held in a variety of settings: the school, a community center, a church, or once a month as part of a family scout meeting. The series can be offered in a variety of time frames: once a week, once every other week, once a month. While the workshops can include children in a variety of grade levels, the workshops can also be targeted to one or two grade levels at a time.

How can the program be linked to the school curriculum and classrooms?

- Teachers can demonstrate some of the FAMILY SCIENCE experiments in class.
- Students who have attended the FAMILY SCIENCE workshops and tried experiments at home could be asked to share them with classmates.
- Teachers can send a single FAMILY SCIENCE experiment home as an occasional home learning assignment.
- Teachers can take responsibility for contacting parents of students in their class and personally inviting them to attend FAMILY SCIENCE nights.
- FAMILY SCIENCE experiments can be shared as part of a home visit program.
- Science experiments can be displayed on school or class bulletin boards.
- Parents who attend FAMILY SCIENCE workshops can be invited to class to demonstrate an experiment.
- Guest speakers at FAMILY SCIENCE workshops can be invited to share their expertise with classrooms.

E-80

Activity Sheet #21

Family Reading

Contact:
Ruth Handel
Montclair State College
Upper Montclair, NJ 07043
(201) 893-7190

What is Family Reading?

FAMILY READING is an intergenerational approach to building family literacy through children's literature and interactive reading strategies. Parents are invited to attend a series of four to ten workshops that explore a range children's literature and help parents learn ways to read and discuss books with their children. The books include folk tales, family stories, oral family traditions, poetry, imaginative books, wordless picture books, and nonfiction on science and social studies topics. The reading strategies that parents are taught are straight forward and simple, yet they tap and develop higher order thinking skills.

Each workshop consists of six components: reporting on home reading; introduction of a children's book; demonstration of a reading strategy; practice of the strategy in pairs using the children's book; group discussion; preparation for reading at home and book borrowing. Frequently, parents also read to children in school at the conclusion of the workshop.

The program is primarily designed for parents and children from preschool to third grade. However, just as parents enjoy the beautiful illustrations and texts of primary children's literature, experience has shown that the books appeal to all members of the family, including older siblings. An important feature of the program is the applicability of the reading strategies to readers of all ages. In addition, adaptations for older children can be made by selecting grade-appropriate books.

What does Family Reading hope to achieve?

FAMILY READING has a two-pronged goal: to enable parents to read, discuss, and enjoy books with their children, thereby developing their children's reading skills; and to develop the adult reading competencies of parents and other caretakers. The workshop model, which has been nationally recognized by the Barbara Bush Foundation for Family Literacy, views reading as a meaning-making activity that occurs in a social context and that builds relationships between the generations and between home and school.

Evaluation of the program in Newark, New Jersey, where there are 23 school sites participating in the program, indicates that parents are supporting the literacy development of their children by reading more to children, discussing books, visiting the library, and valuing the importance of reading. The adults are developing their own literacy skills, seeking out books for themselves, and in many cases, pursing additional education or employment. The family closeness engendered by the project is especially prized. Teachers report increased reading by students and better home-school relationships.

How can a Family Reading program be started?

The Family Reading program can be initiated in one of three ways. First, an interested district or region can contact the developers and contract with them to conduct a training session. Alternatively, a staff developer familiar with conducting workshops and with reading programs can purchase the training materials from New Readers Press, Department 2, Box 131, Syracuse, NY 13210.

Activity Sheet #21a

A third approach would be for a staff developer to attend a training sessions that is being conducted by another district. For example, San Diego City and County schools have implemented the program extensively. Two or three times a year training of trainers sessions are conducted.

How much does the Family Reading program cost?

The FAMILY READING Training Set published by New Readers Press, costs $258.00. It includes a training video, photocopy masters (single copy price is $49.50), trainers manual (single copy prince is $7.00), teacher's guide (single copy price is $10.50), five copies of two of the children's books used in the program and one copy eight other books. Some training materials are also supplied under contract with the program developers.

Children's books are the major cost. Since each workshop presents a specific book, at lease 20 copies of that book need to be purchased so that parents can borrow it for home reading. San Diego Unified (CA), which is extensively implementing the program, has invested $12,000 in sets of children's literature in English and Spanish to assist schools in implementing the program. Schools wishing to implement the program can check out sets of books to use in their workshops and loan to parents. Schools can lower implementation costs by teaming with other schools to buy and then exchange sets of books. Public libraries are sources for supplemental books that parents and children may wish to borrow. Schools also can seek support from local community groups for book purchases.

How should the training sessions be organized?

To have an impact, a series of at least four workshops should be conducted. The series can be offered once a week or once every other week. This length and timing builds a momentum for the parents and they can begin to see the impact at home. The workshops are designed to be conducted with the parents. Their children can be involved in several ways. If the sessions are held during the day, parents can join their child and others in the classroom for a reading session at the conclusion of the workshop. If the sessions are conducted in the evening, parents and children can come together. After refreshments, the children go to a classroom where they are read stories while the parents receive the training. Children then join their parents for a family reading session. Alternatively, parents receive the training and then return home to enjoy the books with their children at home. All three methods have been used with success.

How can the program be linked to the school and classroom curriculum?

Since more and more schools are moving to a literature-based approach to reading, the link between Family Reading and the school curriculum is a natural.

- Teachers can reinforce the reading strategies in class as they introduce different types of children's literature.
- Students whose parents have attended the workshops can be asked to share the books they are reading with the whole class.
- Teachers can take responsibility for contacting parents of students in their class and personally inviting them to attend the Family Reading workshops.
- Family Reading strategies and books can be shared as part of a home visit program.
- Book jacket covers, family writing activities that are part of the reading program and other art work related to books can be displayed in the hallways and classrooms.
- A synopsis of a Family Reading selection and the reading strategy can be shared with parents in the school newsletter.
- Parents who attend Family Reading workshops can be invited to class to share a book with the whole class, just as they are doing with their child at home.
- Authors of children's books can be invited to share at a school assembly as part of an authors' fair.
- The school library can feature the type of children's literature that is being used as the focus of each Family Reading workshop.

E-82

Activity Sheet #22

BOOKS AND BEYOND

Contact
Ellie Topolovac, Program Director
BOOKS AND BEYOND
Solana Beach School District
309 North. Rios Avenue
Solana Beach, CA 92075
(619) 755-8000 or 755-6319
FAX (619) 755-0814

What is BOOKS AND BEYOND?

BOOKS AND BEYOND is a home-based reading program designed to increase students' recreational reading and decrease indiscriminate TV viewing. Through success oriented reading incentive strategies, this highly motivating program produces positive long-lasting behavioral changes in students with regard to recreational reading. Success for each individual student is assured because the program is self-paced and allows for individual differences. Through parent education and student self-monitoring techniques, project participants become more aware of their TV viewing habits and learn to become discriminate TV viewers.

The program is suitable for students kindergarten through ninth grade, and can encompass students at all reading levels—gifted to remedial—and from a variety of socio-economic and cultural backgrounds. Because of the variety of strategies and design of the program, schools can easily tailor it to meet their needs and fit with their curriculum. The program is included as an National Diffusion Network, Developer/Demonstrator Project and is widely in use in over 3000 school districts around the country.

What does BOOKS AND BEYOND hope to achieve?

The program has two primary goals: increase students' time spent and enjoyment from recreational reading, and decrease the amount of time spent watching television. BOOKS AND BEYOND if implemented schoolwide, also can enable the school to begin building a community of readers by involving not just students, but teachers, principal, support staff and parents as well. The initial evaluation of the program showed that these goals can be met. Students participating in the program themselves reported a 31% increase in the average number of books read, a 37% decrease in television viewing and a 13% increase in their scope of reading. Parents of participants reported that their children spent approximately 37% more time in recreational reading activities than was reported by the parents of comparison students. Teachers also reported similar benefits. Both the school and local library reported an increase in circulation of books.

How can BOOKS AND BEYOND be started?

The BOOKS AND BEYOND program can be initiated by purchasing the manuals, which provide all information and materials needed for successful implementation. Directions are clear and concise, graphics for bulletin board displays make reproduction easy, and suggestions for adaptations and modifications provide additional flexibility.

The program can be implemented on a classroom or schoolwide basis. Program implementation is greatly facilitated by having an overall coordinator of the program, perhaps the school librarian or media center teacher, and a core of willing parent volunteers to assist teachers in record keeping, posting of school reading progress, and awarding incentives.

E-83

Activity Sheet #22a

If desired, a school, district, or regional training program can be organized by contacting the developer. It is recommended that a training team of four from each school should participate in the training sessions: the library / media center teacher, a key teacher or administrator, and two parent volunteers.

How much does BOOKS AND BEYOND cost?

The BOOKS AND BEYOND manuals cost $40 per year. Six manuals addressing the following themes are available: Travel Through Time, Jog America, Quest for Knowledge, Sports Decathlon, Around the World with Books, Mysteries of the Deep. The manuals include paper awards that can be reproduced. Other awards are available from BOOKS and BEYOND. The awards average $25 per 100 with the average cost per pupil being about $1.25. Schools often seek community sponsors to help defray expenses. There is also a BOOKS and BEYOND video training tape available for $20.00.

If a training session is organized, travel, per diem, and consultant fee costs would be involved, as well as the substitute or stipend costs for the participants in the training. Since students check out books from the school or public library, no additional books costs are involved.

How should BOOKS AND BEYOND be organized?

Choosing the Theme. There are six BOOKS AND BEYOND manuals, each introducing a new theme, which helps to keep the program fresh and lively each year. Using the graphics in the manual which capture that year's theme, bulletin boards displays are created to chart class and schoolwide reading progress. The program is introduced to the students each year by the coordinator.

Involving the family. Information packets are then sent home to parents, including an introductory letter, student record-keeping forms, and parent/sibling record-keeping forms so the whole family can be involved. Another important part of the packet is the TV viewing monitoring chart and other TV viewing skills materials. These are used to help families become more aware of how much time is spent watching TV rather than reading.

Charting progress. Students are given markers, color coordinated by grade level, which they will use to plot their progress on the bulletin board charts. Faculty members are given brightly colored markers so their students can keep a close eye on their reading progress as well. Children move their own markers when they turn in record-keeping sheets. If desired, markers can also be given to parents to encourage their participation.

Every two weeks class progress is charted on the school display. Schools can be as creative as they wish in giving schoolwide or class incentives, such as a pancake breakfast with "all the syrup you can eat" for 15,000 pages read or a pizza lunch for 30,000 pages.

Reading levels. Each program has eight levels of reading. The basis for moving from level to level can be the amount of time spent reading or the number of pages read. Younger children can participate by being read to, older students by reading themselves.

Awards. Awards are given for success in reaching each of the eight levels, and of course, a Gold Medal for completing all of them. The incentives can be small awards, such as bookmarks, or paper awards which are included in the training manual. The awards can be handed out by each classroom teacher, or for greater impact, by the principal. A gold medal ceremony is usually held for students and their parents who have completed the highest level.

E-84

Activity Sheet #23

FAMILY COMPUTING: At School and At Home

Contact
Dr. Jerold Millers
Jostens Learning Corporation
6170 Cornerstone Court East
San Diego, CA 92121
(800) 521-8538, Ext. 6305

What is Take Home Computer Program?

Jostens Learning Corporation has developed a Take Home Computer Program. Their program provides reading, mathematics, and enrichment software appropriate for kindergarten through grade eight. The reading and mathematics software complements regular classroom instruction while the enrichment programs supplement and extend this basic lesson sequence. The Take Home Computer Program also provides complete training and testing manuals for the site coordinator, parent guides, supplementary workbooks for students, and a variety of participant materials such as posters, bumper stickers, and progress charts designed to boost student self-esteem and increase parent involvement at the school site. A parent workshop kit includes the information needed to present high-interest workshops based on themes such as *Kitchen Math*, *Rainy Days and Saturdays*, and *T.V. and Kids: Quality Time*. Another kit, *Family Audio Journals* contains nine booklets with accompanying audio tapes that provide families with meaningful topics such *Learning Science at Home* and *Parents as Models*.

How can other Family Computing programs be developed?

Family computing can be designed to bring families together using computer technology. Programs can be organized much the way FAMILY SCIENCE or FAMILY MATH classes are conducted. Parents and children come to the school together in the evening or on a Saturday to work in the computer lab on reading, writing, math, science, or social studies computer programs.

A second approach is to acquire several small portable computers which are checked out to parents for at-home use. School software is loaned to the family. The at- home use can focus, as one school did, around writing activities or the computers can be used to practice needed skills.

What do Family Computing programs hope to achieve?

Many urban schools have been able to develop computer labs as part of their efforts to increase the achievement of students. However, often these students do not have access to computers in their homes as is true in many suburban families. Family Computing programs whether conducted at school or through an on-loan program, provide urban parents with the opportunity to become familiar with computers. Students have an opportunity to serve as *teachers* for their parents. Students and parents have the opportunity to reinforce a wide variety of skills.

How can Family Computing programs be started?

Two approaches can be used in initiating Family Computing programs. First if the school has a computer lab, several family computer nights can be organized. Parents and children are paired on the computer together to use the software. Each session could feature a different type of computer programs addressing different skills or a series of sessions could be organized around a theme, such as writing family stories.

Activity Sheet #23a

How much does the program cost?

If an already existing computer lab is used, implementation costs are minimal. The main cost would be for stipends for the teacher(s) conducting the Family Computing Nights. If the school decides to acquire computers for take-home use, obviously the cost of acquiring the computers and the software is more substantial. For information on the cost of the Jostens Take Home Computer Program contact Jostens Learning Corporation.

How should Family Computing be organized?

How the program is organized will depend upon the strategy used—take-home computers or at-school computer use. If Family Computing nights are organized, the number of families invited will depend on the number of computers available. It may be best to organize the sessions by grade level, so that parents can become familiar with the types of computer activities their children are doing at school. However, the unique aspect of computers is that the software can span a wide variety of ages. Like FAMILY SCIENCE, a variety of ages can be accommodated; the limiting factor is the total number of computers available.

If a take home computer program is to be organized, some of the issues to be addressed are: 1) how long will the loan period be? 2) what type of rotational system will be established? 3) what type of instruction needs to be given before computers are sent home? 4) what will be the focus of the computer use at home?

How can the program be linked to the school and classroom curriculum?

- Families who use the computers to do writing activities at home can be asked to share their family writing in class.
- Parents can have the opportunity to learn more about the school curriculum through computer programs.
- Teachers can take responsibility for contacting parents of students in their class and personally inviting them to attend the Family Computing workshops.
- Family writing can be published in the school newsletter or displayed on bulletin boards.
- Students and parents who have attended family computing nights could be asked to conduct a demonstration for the class.
- Students making progress in various skill areas through practice on computers at home can be recognized during class or school recognition programs.

E-56

Activity Sheet #24

Have you tried to...?

- **Offer programs that meet the needs of parents**
  1. Parents are more receptive to ideas that directly affect their children.
  2. Distribute a schoolwide parent needs assessment. Prioritize parent needs. Provide needs assessment in different languages.

- **Involve a cross-section of parents in planning programs**
  1. Use the needs assessment as your guide.
  2. Parents have many ideas that can help strengthen your parent involvement program.
  3. Some groups need help in a certain area. Personalize your workshops and activities.
  4. Parents are a valuable resource; they know the community.

- **Publicize meetings in a variety of ways**
  1. Parent newsletter, home bulletins, school marquee, posters, community agencies, church.
  2. Send a personal invitation from the school through the U.S. mail.
  3. Use the ASB leaders, clubs, organizations to help publicize.
  4. Host a continental breakfast or luncheon - This always gets parents involved.
  5. Set up a table with coffee for parents the first weeks of school and at open house to invite parents to participate in school activities. Have some literature available regarding what the school has to offer and how they can get involved.
  6. Work with your feeder schools to help parents become familiar of the changes and the programs their children will experience in junior. high and high school.

- **Provide adequate advance notice**
  1. Start planning immediately. Make a time line of everything that is needed beforehand and assign different jobs so that you don't have to do everything. Send your bulletins ahead of time and on the best days of the week. Never send an important notice on a minimum day.

- **Send timely follow-up reminders**
  1. Pass out reminders in the morning when parents drop children off at school.
  2. Include a reminder in a home bulletin.
  3. Stress the value of family participation and especially target your audience.

- **Get teachers and students involved and provide incentives.**
  1. Give prizes to the classroom that has the most parents attending. Kids like popcorn and stickers. Older students like coupons for free items at the student store or cafeteria or a coupon for food at a nearby fast food place.
  2. For a series of workshops, you may want to provide a bus for a field trip at a culminating activity for families (obviously this will require more resources and planning).

- **Target a particular group of families. Provide an interpreter.**
  1. Decide who your audience should be—all families, a grade level, a language group.
  2. Have speakers available in the different languages whenever possible.
  3. Provide an interpreter to encourage discussion with parents.

E 87

Activity Sheet #24a

- **Have handouts available in different languages.**
  1. This takes a lot of planning but is worth the effort. Parents really appreciate it.
  2. Make sure there are no errors in the translations.

- **Schedule meetings at times most convenient to parents.**
  1. Working parents need meetings held in the evenings or on a Saturday morning.
  2. Preschool and kindergarten parents bring their children to school and pick them up everyday. Schedule meeting at those convenient times.

- **Set up a telephone tree. Parent volunteers can call parents.**
  1. Initial contact should be from a person with the same language and ethnicity.
  2. Provide a script for the person making the calls.
  3. Call parents in the evening. You'll notice the difference in attendance.

- **Provide child care and/or involve children in the program.**
  1. Plan family workshops where parents and children learn together.
  2. If a separate meeting is planned with the parents, incorporate children into at least one part of the program—parents are more likely to attend if their children are involved.
  3. Plan activities for child care. Include books, color books, crayon, bingo, etc. Don't forget prizes or certificates. Videos are a hit. Reserve the T.V. and VCR and know how to use them. How about some snacks? Keep your audience happy.

- **Provide transportation if needed.**
  1. Organize a parent carpool.
  2. If funds available provide a school bus.
  3. Hold meetings at different locations in the community (e.g., church, rec. centers, or an apartment complex community room.)

- **Have a door prize at the end of every meeting.**
  1. Solicit prizes from staff, PTA, community businesses and partners.
  2. Have a fundraiser to purchase prizes.
  3. Give away books, stickers, bookmarks or other family learning materials as prizes.

- **Provide refreshments.**
  1. Coffee and cookies are always a hit.
  2. Have special goodies such as a continental breakfast, a free luncheon or a potluck. You provide the paper goods.

- **Evaluate meetings. Make improvements a priority.**
  1. Evaluations are very important. There's always room for improvement.
  2. Publicize your efforts to the staff and to parents. Promote your good work.
  3. Invite the administrators to your activities so they can have a first hand look at what's happening.
  4. Keep a portfolio or notebook of the activities you are having. Take pictures.
  5. Publish a parent newsletter.

SAN DIEGO CITY SCHOOLS, Community Relations and Integration Services Division, Parent Involvement and Support
Reprinted with permission.

E-88

Activity Sheet #25

NEXT STEPS PLANNING SHEET

Based on what has been learned, the strengths of our school's current homework guidelines, practices and programs are:

Our school currently provides the following workshops and learning opportunities for parents in regard to homework and home learning.

Families are currently involved in home learning activities in the following ways:

Activity Sheet #25a

NEXT STEPS PLANNING SHEET (continued)

Based on what has been learned, the next steps to take to strengthen homework and home learning activities are:

Step / Activity	Timeline	Resources Needed

Who else needs to be involved for these steps to be effective?

What problems might be encounter in taking these next steps?

Activity Sheet #26

Homework and Home Learning Resources for Teachers and Families

The California State PTA (1990) *Parents Empowering Parents.* Los Angeles: Education Assessment Publishing Company.

This publication, written from the parents' viewpoint and available in both English and Spanish, will be valuable to both parents and educators. Sections on homework and on reading, writing, and math are particularly useful. A list of "Homework Tips for Parents" might be sent home with students or published in the school newsletter. There are samples of daily schedules, lists of supplies, homework contracts, and assignment calendars. Specific suggestions are given for helping the child at home with reading and writing. In the math section, the skills usually taught in grades 1-3 are listed. Specific suggestions are given for what schools can do to help parents teach their children math.

Canter, L (1989) *Homework Without Tears.* Santa Monica, CA: Lee Canter Associates.

Every teacher should have a copy of this book in their classroom library to use in planning, organizing, and assigning homework, and to share with parents who are having trouble getting their child to concentrate and complete homework assignments. The book addresses such topics as establishing a homework policy, developing a schoolwide homework plan, teaching students how to do homework, and how to motivate students. Ten common homework problems are discussed with suggestions of what teachers and parents can do together to solve them.

Chrispeels, J., Boruta, M., and Daugherty, M. (1989) *Communicating With Parents.* San Diego: CA, San Diego County Office of Education.

This resource manual for teachers and administrators contains over three hundred exhibits of the ways that schools can increase the effectiveness of their communications with parents. The first half of the book focuses on school level communications, addressing such topics as newsletters, handbooks, parent surveys, parent-teacher conferencing, workshops and meeting, and volunteers, where as the second half of the book provides examples of classroom communications such as welcoming letters, progress reports, class newsletters, telephone conferencing, homework and home learning activities, and conducting home visits.

Clark, R. M. (1991). *Home Involvement Activities*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.

This series of small booklets, published by Houghton Mifflin is intended to be a companion to their elementary mathematics textbooks. Each grade level book contains home learning activities that parents can do with their children to reinforce math skills being taught in the classroom. Each section of the booklet corresponds to a chapter in the math text. The activities use everyday household items, are straightforward, and do not take a great deal of time. They are particularly helpful in giving students an opportunity to apply the math skills they are learning to real life situations in their home using newspapers, magazines, TV, measuring tools, maps, groceries, etc.

Activity Sheet 26a

Cutright, M. J. (1989). ***The National PTA Talks to Parents: How to Get the Best Education for Your Child.*** **New York, NY: Doubleday.**

This book should be in every school library in the parents' corner. Each chapter of the book helps parents to see the important role they play in their child's success in school. There are tips for getting children ready for school, especially on how to stimulate their learning at home, how to help your child once they have started to school, and how to help children spend their out of school hours wisely. There are also chapters on understanding the school, knowing how to chart your child's progress, and how to make your voice heard.

Everett, B. A., Holmes, C. G. and Thraen, S. R. (1991) ***Helping Your Child at Home . . . with Science; . . . with Math.*** **New York, NY: Macmillan/McGraw-Hill School Publishing.**

This series of booklets is designed to accompany the Macmillan/McGraw-Hill texts in math and science. Written especially for parents, the booklets include activities that only take about 10 minutes, with east-to follow, step-by-step directions. Parents do not need any special knowledge of the subject matter, and only common household articles are used.

Frender, Gloria. (1990). ***Learning to Learn: Strengthening Study Skills and Brain Power.*** **Nashville, TN: Incentive Publications.**

This book is most appropriate for the upper elementary student. It discusses a variety of study skills, including learning styles, time management and organizational skills, note-taking skills, reading skills, memory development techniques, test-taking skills. While the book is aimed at students, by becoming familiar with the content, parents will be able to assist their child develop good study habits. The last chapter gives specific tips on how parents can help and how to conference with teachers.

Goldsmith, E. and Handel, R. D. (1990). ***Family Reading.*** **Syracuse, NY: New Reader's Press**

Through the *Family Reading* program, adults learn to read to children while developing their own literacy skills. This program addresses the growing awareness that literacy proficiencies of children are tied to those of the adults in their family. *Family Reading* contain 10 instructional units, each built around a specific reading strategy and a literary genre. Each unit focuses on a children's book and an adult reading selection. A comprehensive teacher's guide as well as student materials such as photocopy masters, adult reading selections, and writing exercises are included.

Home and School Institute. (1984) ***In Any Language: Parents are Teachers.*** **Washington, D.C.: The Home School Institute.**

This publication of 20 bilingual home learning activities is designed to help parents and children practice English and learn useful skills together. The program is especially designed for elementary school limited English proficient students and their parents. The activities do not cost any money, take little time, and use everyday objects. The book is published in both English and Spanish.

Activity Sheet 26b

Pell, E. and Weiser-Ramirez, E. (1989). *Making the Most of Your Child's Education*. Washington, D.C.: ASPIRA Institute for Policy Research.

This small monograph, available in both English and Spanish, discusses the importance of parents being involved in their child's education. Some of the topics covered are how to talk with your child, how to help your child study, discipline, and parental rights to be involved.

Rich, Dorothy. (1988). *Megaskills*. Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin Company.

The author identifies ten skills as important to success in school and life which children need to learn: confidence, motivation, effort, responsibility, initiative, perseverance, caring, teamwork, common sense, and problem solving. Through the strategies presented in this book parents (and teachers) can help children learn these skills. The "home learning recipes" are designed to reinforce, not duplicate schoolwork, be easy to do, fun, take little time, cost little, and are presented step-by-step. The book also contains sections on reinforcing reading, writing and math at home, creativity, networking with other parents, and working with the school.

Rich, Dorothy. (1983). *Survival Guide for Busy Parents: How to Help Your Child Do Well at School While You Do Well at Work*: Washington, D.C.: The Home School Institute.

This book is designed for parents in the work force. It contains practical tips on how to organize parent and child daily activities to accomplish necessary tasks, and, at the same time, help children reinforce basic skills. Suggestions are given for things that can be done while eating a meal, making beds, even brushing teeth. The book includes sections on developing responsible children, positive use of television, single, working parents, discipline and self-esteem.

Stenmark, J. K., Thompson, V. and Cossey, R. (1986). *Family Math*. Berkeley, CA: Lawrence Hall of Science, University of California.

The Family Math program focuses on parents and children learning mathematics together. The book which accompanies six to eight lessons, one to two hours long, gives parents and children an opportunity to develop problem-solving skills and to build an understanding of mathematics with "hands-on" materials. The book can be used, however, by a parent without attending a class.. Topics in *Family Math* are in the general categories of arithmetic, geometry, probability and statistics, measurement, estimation, calculators, computers, logical thinking and math requirements for various careers. The book is also available in Spanish, *Matématica para la Familia*.

E-93

PARTICIPANT EVALUATION FORM

Building Home-School Partnerships for Learning

This has been a pilot workshop. Please help us revise it for wider use by answering the following questions.

Name of Workshop: ______________________________ Date: ____

School District: ______________________________ State: ____

Name of Your School or Organization: ________________________

1. What was the most helpful aspect of this workshop? Why?

2. What was the least helpful aspect of this workshop? Why?

3. If this workshop is presented again, what would you change and why?

I am (check one)

___ a K-3 grade teacher
___ a 4-6 grade teacher
___ a principal
___ another school site professional (specify) ________________
___ a school district staff member
___ a school district official
___ a parent
___ other (specify) ____________________

Thank you for taking part in this workshop and giving us your thoughts on it. We hope you will find it useful in building stronger partnerships with the parents of your students.

F-1

Building Home-School Partnerships for Learning: Workshops for Urban Educators (Pilot Version)

School District Policies And Supports For Home-School Partnerships

Workshop Leader's Guide

Developed for
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
U.S. Department of Education
by Dr. Nancy Feyl Chavkin

F-2

OVERVIEW

KEY CONCEPT

District-level officials can make a major contribution to effective home-school partnerships and parent involvement in home learning. Key components of district-level plans for strengthening home-school partnerships are: (1) policies, and (2) supports for polices related to parent involvement.

RATIONALE AND PURPOSE

Policies and supports for policies on parent involvement in home-school partnerships and home learning are critical first steps for school districts interested in strengthening parent involvement. Home-school partnerships involve mutual collaboration between parents and educators in promoting student achievement. Educators need to take the lead in creating such partnerships.

The purpose of this workshop is to focus participant thinking on the importance of policies and supports for policies and to provide knowledge that would assist in the development of district policies and supports for these policies. Supports are needed for the development, implementation and maintenance of policies.

This workshop provides a framework for understanding the relationship between policies and the supports for these policies and programs. Examples of policies and supports for policies from school districts which have done substantial work in this area are utilized. Districts that develop parent involvement programs without developing policies and supports for policies risk losing their programs when administrations, funding, or other key factors change.

LEARNER OBJECTIVES

By the end of this workshop, participants will be able to:

1. Define and describe effective policies and supports for policies on home-school partnerships by reference to current research and literature.
2. Recall and discuss school board policies dealing with parent involvement from at least two different school districts.
3. Talk about the strategies and resources used by at least two different school districts to support policy about parent involvement.
4. Identify and explain the key components of policy and support for policy about parent involvement.

ESTIMATED TIME:

This workshop can be presented in two hours for an audience who is familiar with formulating school district policies. The leader's guide provides directions for time variations. For an audience unfamiliar with formulating policy the workshop can be done in its entirety in 3 1/2 hours or as a full day program or retreat.

F-3

ACTIVITIES		TIME ESTIMATE Short	Long*
#1	Introduction and/or Optional Ice-Breaker	10 mins.	25 mins.
#2	Policy and Support for Policy on Home-School Partnerships	15 mins.	30 mins.
	Break: Long Version		10 mins.
#3	Sample Policies	25 mins.	45 mins.
	Break: Short Version	10 mins.	
#4	Developing, Implementing, and Maintaining Policy Supports	15 mins.	25 mins.
	Break: Long Version		10 mins.
#5	Case Studies of School District Support	30 mins.	45 mins.
#6	Summary, Evaluation, and Follow-Up Ideas	15 mins.	25 mins.
Total		2 hours	3 1/2 hours

* Time estimates are guidelines for the 3 1/2 hour session. Time estimates for a full day session would be determined by individual leaders.

TRANSPARENCIES: Please see transparency section for list.

PARTICIPANT WORKBOOK CONTENTS: Please see workbook.

EQUIPMENT AND MATERIALS

- **Overhead projector and screen**
- **Easel, flip chart, and marking pens**
- **Note paper and pencils for all participants**
- **Participant Workbooks**
- **Movable chairs and tables for participants**
- **Welcome signs**
- **Participant name tags**
- **Refreshments**
- **Lemons or Limes for Optional Ice-Breaker**
- **Carbon Paper**

READINGS / RESOURCES

See annotated summaries in the back of the participant workbook. These summaries cover major research and practice books and articles on district policy and home-school partnerships.

F-4

Preparations for the Workshop

The workshop leader will need to read and study the material outlined here and make decisions about the appropriateness of each activity to the intended audience. The material should be adapted to the leader's personal style and background. It may be helpful to read the Background Information sheet (pages 4-5) for the research rationale behind this workshop and some of the articles suggested in the annotated summaries section. Also, talk with school district personnel who have leadership in the area of policies on parent involvement and home-school partnerships. An explanation of home-school partnerships should be given using the key concepts and definitions in the sourcebook overview. A flow chart of how policy is made in the district may also be helpful. The leader may want to have one for reference to distribute during the workshop.

This workshop needs to be adapted to the audience. The first part of the workshop on the policy and supports for policy should either be omitted or covered in only a short review if your audience is a group of experienced policy makers. In a district where home-school partnership policies already exist, you may want to skip the section on policy and move directly to the support section. In a mixed audience such as a strategic planning team that includes parents, teachers, business representatives, and community organizations as well as administrators and school board members, it is essential that you do the workshop in its entirety so that everyone understands the terminology and purpose of home-school partnership policy.

The leader may wish to develop assessment tools for examining the needs and interests of participants either prior to the workshop or immediately upon arrival. At a minimum, the leader should be well-informed about the current status regarding policies and supports for policies on home-school partnerships in the district(s) represented in the workshop. To this end, the leader may wish to send participants a pre-workshop mailing which outlines the purpose and objectives of the session and requests that they bring copies of their district's policies dealing with home-school partnerships. The leader should also have available or ask participants to bring any relevant federal (Chapter 1, Bilingual, Migrant) or state policies on home-school partnerships.

The leader will help the participants describe the advantages and disadvantages of different types of school policies and supports for policies using discussion and the flip chart. The leader will also assist the participants in identifying and discussing the major debates /dilemmas regarding school system policies and supports for policies. During the evaluation and summary activity, the leader will encourage participants to begin to assess their own district's policies about home-school partnerships and plan their further exploration of this topic. The leader will also give participants the opportunity to evaluate their own learning in this workshop and the usefulness of the information presented.

This workshop will be a first step in action-planning for many participants, and they will need time and encouragement to follow up on some of the ideas presented here. Be prepared to be available for questions/consultation following the session. The group may even want to reconvene at a later date and talk about what has happened to their ideas and plans. No two districts will develop the same kind of policy and support systems. The leader will need to stress the importance of each district developing its own policy and supports for policy on home-school partnerships. It is crucial that policy and supports reflect the nature of each individual district.

F-5

Background Information

Research on District Policies and Home-School Partnerships

Research tells us that parents and community members are part of the rich resources and skills that each school district has. Walberg's (1984) synthesis of studies on academic learning reveals that parents influence key determinants of cognitive, affective, and behavioral learning. Henderson's *The Evidence Continues To Grow: Parent Involvement Improves Student Achievement* (1987) summarizes 49 research studies and documents the incontrovertible fact that parent involvement increases student achievement. Rhoda Becher's (1984) review of the literature on parent involvement in early childhood education supports the notion that parent education programs improve children's language skills, test performance, and behavior. Furthermore, there are other important benefits of family participation in the schools. Rich (1985) found that parent involvement in education helped produce increases in student attendance, decreases in the drop-out rate, positive parent-child communication, improvement of student attitudes and behavior, and more parent-community support of the school.

Regardless of the communities they serve, all school districts can develop effective programs to involve parents in the education of their children. James Comer's (1988) work, which began with the Yale University Child Study Canter and two inner-city schools in New Haven, Connecticut and now includes more than 50 schools around the country, shows that supportive bonds between home and school can increase academic achievement and improve attendance and discipline without any change in the socioeconomic makeup of the schools. Herb Walberg's (1984) examination of 29 studies on family involvement in education found that participation in parent involvement in education programs is twice as predictive of achievement as socioeconomic status.

Chavkin and Williams' study (1987) found that more than 70% of both superintendents and school board presidents believed it was the school district's responsibility to provide a policy and guidelines for involving parents in their children's education. Parents' responses were very similar to administrators' responses. Most parents wanted the school to take the lead in parent involvement and give them ideas about working with their children, particularly in the area of homework. In short, both parents and educators want school district to provide policies and supports for parent involvement in education.

Research tells us that school districts with policies about parent involvement have more parent involvement. In a study by Chavkin and Williams' (1987), they found that the existence of formal, written policies about parent involvement led to increased parent involvement activities. Policies about parent involvement in education and support for these policies about parent involvement in education are two key facilitating factors.

Williams and Chavkin (1990) used a key informant approach to identify and describe the essential elements of promising parent involvement programs in five southwestern states. Besides written policies, other elements that support educators working with families include:

1. Administrative support (funds, materials/product resources, e.g. meeting space, communication equipment, computers, duplication/media equipment and staff)
2. Training (for staff as well as parents and community members)
3. Partnership approach (joint planning, goal setting, definition of roles, program assessment, development of supports, needs sensing, setting standards)
4. Two-way communications (frequent and regular)
5. Networking (to share information, resources, and technical expertise)
6. Evaluation (formative evaluations to allow districts to make policy revisions on a continuous basis.

In each case, the school board set the official district policy on parent and community involvement and then provided administrative support for policy implementation. Individual schools within the district developed their own strategies for implementation with support from the central office as necessary.

The Institute for Responsive Education's research (Davies, 1987) points out that because school districts have unique features which make them resistant to change, policies about parent involvement are necessary. The goals of schools as organizations are diffuse; the method of goal achievement is fragmented and responsibility is diffused among administrators, counselors, teachers, families, and students. In addition, the informal norms of schools are powerful, and the formal structure is complicated and not always well-coordinated. These organizational realities make the idea of parent involvement in education an idea that is both difficult to introduce and maintain without a formal, written policy. Davies (1987) makes a recommendation that a mandate or policy for parent involvement is essential. His work and the study by the Institute for Responsive Education clearly show that policy is a critical element if the natural organizational resistance to change is to be overcome.

References can be found in the Annotated Summaries from Research and Practice Literature located in the Participant Workbook.

F-7

Debates and Dilemmas

Key issues will arise in the discussion throughout the workshop. The leader should be prepared for questions, debates and dilemmas that occur in many school districts and may want to incorporate some of these key issues in the workshop. The following are issues that the leader may want to consider:

1. Who develops the district's policy on parent involvement issues? (Activity #4)
2. Who is responsible for implementing policy on home-school partnerships? (Activity #4)
3. How do district decisions mesh with individual school or site-based decisions on home-school partnerships? (Activity #2 - Background Information Sheet)
4. How does formal, written policy relate to informal policy or practices regarding home-school partnerships? (Activity #2 - Background Information Sheet)
5. How much money goes to parent involvement versus classrooms in tough budget times? (Activity #5 - San Diego Grants)
6. Should principals be evaluated on the basis of their school's home-school partnerships efforts? (Activity #3)
7. How do we integrate special programs (Chapter 1, Migrant, Bilingual, etc.) into district-wide home-school partnership programs? (Activity #2 & #3)
8. How can we break down some of the barriers inherent in home-school partnership district policies? Consider issues such as teacher contracts, insurance problems, building use, extra time for home visits and training, extra personnel and costs for new programs. (Activity #5 - Comer Process case study)
9. Should districts look to grant money to support parent involvement in home learning? (Activity #5 - San Diego Case Study)
10. How does policy about parent involvement in home learning differ at various grade levels (K-3, middle/junior, and senior high school)? (Activity #5 - Parents In Touch article)
11. Should policy on home-school partnerships and home learning be separate from policy on parent involvement in general? (Activity #3)
12. What kinds of policies are in place for homework and how well are they working? (Activity #3)
13. How does policy on home-school partnerships and home learning relate to policy on homework? (Activity #3)
14. What are the limitations of trying to change practices and attitudes by policy? (Activity #4)

(NOTE: There are both ideal and actual aspects of many of the questions. The leader may want to consider not only what is happening, but also what should or could be happening.)

F-8

Activity #1: Introduction

Directions and Procedures: 2 Hour Version

1. Introduce yourself and present a brief explanation of the key definitions which represent the four over-arching themes of the sourcebook. Suggest how this workshop "fits in" with the other workshops in the sourcebook
   Use Transparency 1 (T-1).

2. Present an overview of the District Policy workshop using the information provided in the Rationale and Purpose section of the leader's guide. Present the key concepts, purpose and learner objectives for the district workshop. This workshop will focus on the leadership needed at the district level if parent involvement programs at the school and classroom levels are to succeed. This leadership needs to come from the district's board of education as it promulgates policies and provides supports to undergird these policies.
   Use T-2, T-3 and T-4.

3 1/2 Hour Version: Introduction and Ice-Breaker with Lemons

1. Use this activity as an optional ice-breaker to set the tone for open discussion and equality among all participants. Always be aware that you need to relate the fun and games to the workshop topic (school district policy). Be sure to monitor your time so that you do not spend too much time on this ice-breaker. Participants usually enjoy it and may want to continue longer than you have time.

2. Bring sufficient lemons or limes so that each group of 3-4 persons can share one. Break the group into small groups of 3-4 people who do not know each other very well. Give each group the following instructions:

   a. Introduce yourselves, your school or school district, and your position.
   b. Get to know your lemon. List its characteristics, background, and name it.
   c. List the policies that affect your lemon.
   d. List the comments (good and bad) that your lemon has about policy and any questions your lemons has about policy.

3. Allow (3-5 minutes) for discussion within each group. The leader should weave between groups checking that all groups understand the instructions. Encourage participants to be creative.

4. Call the groups back together and ask a member from each group to introduce the members of the group and their lemon. Give each group an opportunity to report.

5. When all the groups are finished, gather the lemons on a table and mix them up. Ask the reporters from each group to find their lemons.

6. Spend a few minutes tying this fun activity to key points about policy.

   a. All lemons are alike and different in some ways.
   All school districts are alike and different in some ways.

b. What works for one lemon, may not work for all lemons.
What works for one school district may not work for another school district.

c. Lemons are affected by policies (on pesticide, water, harvest, workers, sale, marketing, storage, etc.).
School districts are affected by policies.

d. Policies occur at many different levels and all have effects on the lemon. For example, the lemon is part of a group of lemons on a branch of a tree, part of a tree, part of an orchard, part of a farm, part of a community, state, country.
Schools districts are part of a community, county, state, country.
The idea of embedded systems can be illustrated on a flip chart by a series of concentric circles.

e. Some participants always suggest that you can make something sweet out of something sour (lemonade out of lemons). Others suggest that the inside of a lemon is soft and the outside is tough (school districts seem hard too, but once you get to know the people they are nice).

7. Proceed with the introduction and overview as stated in the 2 Hour Version above.

F-10

Activity #2: Policy and Supports for Policy on Home-School Partnerships

Directions and Procedures: 2 Hour Version:

1. Ask: *What do we mean by policy for home-school partnerships?*

    a. Explain that for the purposes of our discussion, we will use "policy" to talk about the formal, written policies of a school district. These are the issues on which the school board takes an official vote and position. We will not use policy to refer to what schools actually or usually do; we'll use it in reference to the official posture of a school district regarding a given issue. The phrase "school district policies" refers to the rules and regulations that are written down, officially approved by the board of education, and intended as guidelines for all in the district. **Use T-5.**

2. Ask: *What do we mean by support for policy on home-school partnerships?*

    a. We'll use the word "support" in much the same way as you are used to referring to support. The difference is that we will talk about support during three different stages of policy--development, implementation, and maintenance. Support is what helps a policy come into formal existence (development), what helps translate a policy "from paper to practice" (implementation), and what helps us continue the practices (maintenance).

3. Ask: *What should be included in school district policies on home-school partnerships?*

    a. Ask participants what requirements for parent involvement they believe should be stipulated in school board policy. Instruct them to turn to someone seated beside them and in share-pairs identify 2-4 concepts that they believe should be embedded in district-wide policy.

    b. Ask for volunteers to call out responses, one at a time, and record these on chart paper. When you have completed the list for the whole group present the National Coalition for Parent Involvement in Education (NCPIE) guidelines by uncovering them one at a time and relating group responses listed on the chart paper to relevant NCPIE recommendations. **Use T-6A.**

    c. Ask for a show of hands of those who are familiar with the National Coalition for Parent Involvement in Education (NCPIE). Explain that this is a group of more than 25 education-related organizations which recommends that all district-wide policies on parent involvement contain the following concepts:

(General Parameters T-6A)

(1) Opportunities for all parents to become informed about how the parent involvement program in their respective school will be designed and carried out;

F-11

(2) Participation of parents who lack literacy skills or who do not speak English;

(3) Involvement of parents of children at all ages and grade levels;

(4) Recognition of diverse family structures, circumstances, and responsibilities, including differences that might impede parent participation. The person(s) responsible for a child may not be the child's biological parents, and policies and programs should include participation by all persons interested in the child's educational progress.

(Program Requirements T-6B)

(5) Regular information for parents about their children's participation and progress in specific educational programs and the objectives of those programs;

(6) Opportunities for parents to assist in the instructional process at school and at home.

(Resource Considerations T-6B)

(7) Professional development for teachers and staff to enhance their effectiveness with parents;

(8) Linkages with social service agencies and community groups to address key family and community issues;

d. Refer participants to Activity Sheet 1, the NCPIE Guidelines, in their Workbook. Ask participants to compare the group's listing (on chart paper) with NCPIE's listing and to note any discrepancies. Allow opportunity for individual comments or questions concerning any discrepancies. Finally, ask if anyone in the group has a problem with the school board stipulating any one of the 8 concepts outlined by NCPIE or, if in the alternative, anyone would like to speak on the importance of including these eight guidelines. You may wish to close this section by suggesting that the role of a school board policy on parent involvement is to give direction and provide guidance that would ensure a common standard for all school level programs. At the same time, the policy should allow schools some latitude and flexibility in program design so that they can address special needs and interests and/or use unique resources at the school level.

e. At this point, you may wish to make reference to any existing national or state legislation that pertains to policies on parent involvement in home learning.

f. Refer participants to Activity Sheet #2 in their Workbook and present Chapter One requirements. **Use T-7.**

*Make Chapter One Local Education Agency (LEA) personnel, including pupil services personnel, available to parents;

* Convene a district-wide or building-level annual meeting of the parents of participating children as well as providing opportunities for regular meetings;

* Provide timely information about the program to parents;

* Make parents aware of parental involvement requirements and other relevant provisions of the program; and

* Provide information, to the extent practicable, in a language and form that parents can understand.

3 1/2 Hour Version:

1. Read Background Information paper (pages 4-5) and incorporate into mini-lecture. Proceed with shorter version presentation.

F-13

Activity #3: Sample Policies

Leader's Note: Prior to the workshop, check to see if your state has a policy on parent involvement. If so, you'll want to reproduce this to augment materials provided in the Workbook. In addition, be sure to procure copies of local school board policies governing districts represented in your audience.

Directions and Procedures: 2 Hour Version

1. Divide participants into groups of four to five members. Assign one sample policy to each group. (Activity sheets 4-8 are sample policies)

2. Instruct groups to read their assigned policy and choose a recorder who will jot down responses to the following questions based on small group discussions. Refer participants to Activity Sheet 9 in their workbook. **Use T-8.**

   a. What are the goals of this policy and how clearly are they defined?

   b. What steps does the policy say will be taken to achieve these goals?

   c. Is there any reference to resources needed?

   d. How well does this policy meet the NCPIE guidelines? Chapter One requirements?

   e. Which elements of this policy would be the most useful for your school district?

3, Monitor activity by walking around and helping participants with their pacing, (i.e. apprising them of remaining time, and answering any questions they may have).

4. Facilitate reporting out and sharing in whole group.

3 1/2 Hour Version

1. Begin by dividing the group into small groups of four or five members. When new groups have formed, assign several activity sheets to each group (i.e. table group 1 might be assigned policies presented on activity sheets 4,5,6; table group 2 might be assigned policies presented on activity sheets 5,6,7; table group 3, those on activity sheets 6,7,8; and so on).

2. Instruct groups to give members different activity sheets to read their assigned choose a recorder who will jot down responses to the following questions based on small group discussions. Refer participants to Activity Sheet 9 in their workbook. **Use T-8.**

3. Allow time for individual reading and response to questions. Monitor activity by walking around and helping participants with their pacing, i.e. apprising them of remaining time, and answering any questions they may have.

4. Call time, and instruct participants to share with others in their small group. Also instruct small groups to assign a recorder to keep a running list of the similarities and differences among the policies covered in their group. Suggest that each group compare its listing to the suggestions offered by NCPIE and presented in the previous activity if time permits.

5. Facilitate reporting out and sharing in whole group. Suggestion: Ask for one group to report findings on analysis of policy found on Activity Sheet 4; then invite other group reviewing that policy to piggy back on this report if they have anything to add. Go to another group for a report on the second policy; follow the same procedure to procure input from other groups that reviewed the same policy. Continue around using quick-paced reporting and recording of ideas.

F-15

Activity #4: Developing, Implementing, and Maintaining Policy Supports

Directions and Procedures: 2 Hour Version:

1. Developing Policy

A. Ask: *"What is one important step a school district can take to support the **development** of effective policies on home-school partnerships?"*

Ask participants to take a few seconds to reflect and then instruct participants to share their response with an individual nearby. Next ask for volunteers to share paired responses with whole group as you record these on chart paper. Use these responses to lead into the NCPIE recommendations for developing a parent involvement policy. **Use T-9.**

1. NCPIE recommends that schools districts support the development of policies in the following ways:

   a. Assess parent needs and interests about ways of working with schools; and
   b. Set clear and measurable goals with parent and community input.

2. Ask participants if they are aware of any district-wide effort to assess parents needs and interests. If so, ask one respondent about the nature and scope of this effort, the results, and when it was conducted?

2. Implementing Policy

A. Ask: *"What can a school district do to support the **implementation** of a policy intended to promote home-school partnerships?"*

Point out to participants that when a policy on parent involvement is developed and adopted, school districts need to begin thinking about what they can do to support the successful **implementation** of such policies. Ask participants to jot down one idea in response to this question.

B. Ask: *"Did any of you write down an idea similar to this recommendation?*

Invite participants to relate their ideas to the specific NCPIE recommendations. Then ask one or more of those who respond affirmatively to share reasons why they believe this support is important to policy implementation. If no one came up with an idea similar to a given NCPIE recommendation, ask group if they care to comment on how or why this could be an important key or to share any concerns they may have with the recommendation. Proceed through each of the recommendations in turn. **Use T-10.**

* Hire and train a parent liaison to directly contact parents and coordinate parent activities. The liaison should be bilingual as needed and sensitive to the needs of parents and the community, including the non-English speaking community.

* Develop public relations to inform parents, businesses, and the community about parent involvement policies and programs through newsletters, slide shows, videotapes, local newspapers, and such.

* Recognize the importance of a community's historic, ethnic, linguistic, or cultural resources in generating interest in parent participation. Even when there are problems, such as desegregation issues, a parent involvement program can serve as a forum for discussion and a conduit for change.

* Use creative forms of communications between educators and parents. This may include parent/teacher conferences which yield individual parent/child and teacher/child plans, newsletters mailed to parents, etc.

*Mobilize parents as volunteers in the school assisting teachers with instructional tasks, lunchroom duties, and administrative functions. Parents might act as volunteer tutors, classroom aides, and invited speakers.

*Train educators to include techniques for surmounting barriers between parents and schools so that teachers, administrators and parents interact as partners.

3. Maintaining Policy

A. Ask: *"What can a school district do to support the* ***maintenance*** *of a policy intended to promote home-school partnerships?"*

Now that we've looked at supports for policy development and implementation we'll turn our attention to the maintenance of support. This **maintenance** of policies is perhaps the most-often overlooked part of the process. Our attention tends to drift once we've developed and implemented policies.

1. Present the NCPIE recommendations for maintaining the momentum and enthusiasm for policies following their implementation: **Use T-11.**

   a. Integrate information and assistance with other aspects of the total learning environment. Parents should have access to information about such services as health care and nutrition programs provided by schools or community agencies.

   b. Schedule activities flexibly to reach diverse parent groups.

   c. Evaluate the effectiveness of parent involvement programs and activities on a regular basis.

2. Summarize this section with the "typology of supports". Ask participants to share with a neighbor what they believe to be the most important supports for each of these three. Then allow for quick reporting out. Write participant responses on the transparency with a non-permanent transparency pen. **Use T-12.**

F-17

3 1/2 Hour Version:

Present information as in the 2 hour version with supplemental information from the National School Boards Association (NSBA). Refer participants to Activity Sheet 3.

1. Developing Policy

The National School Boards Association (NSBA) also suggests that school districts develop policies by first conducting assessments. They provide a sample checklist on policy topics for administrators to complete. Refer participants to the NSBA publication, First Teachers described in the Annotated Summaries at the end of the in participant workbook. **Use T-13.**

Step 1: Assess current policies and needs.

a. Review current policies to determine the key components of successful programs.
b. Ask for input from parents.
c. Assess district needs and goals.

Other assessment checklists for use by school districts can be found in :
Henderson, Marburger, and Oom's: Beyond the Bake Sale: An Educator's Guide to Working with Parents (1986)

Cale's Planning for Parent Involvement: Involvement: A Handbook for Administrators, Teachers and Parents. (see annotated summaries)

2. Implementing Policy

Present NSBA recommendations on policy implementation, noting their resemblance to the NCPIE suggestions. **Use T-14.**

Step 3: Communicate the Policy
a. Inform all staff of the substance of the policy and of the board's commitment to the policy.
b. Inform parents and community-at-large of board policy and commitment.
c. Use a variety of communication methods.

Step 4: Develop a Plan to Implement the Policy
a. Assign specific responsibilities for implementing the program.
b. Obtain materials from other parent involvement programs.
c. Establish priorities (long and short-term goals).

3. Maintaining Policy

The NSBA also has recommendations that apply to the maintenance stage.
Use T-15.

Step 5: Evaluate the Policy
a. Evaluate how successful the program is .
b. Plan to review the policy at regular intervals.
c. Revise policy and programs regularly in light of evaluations.

Conclude lecture by presenting the following caveat: there are limitations to policies and supports for policies.

a. Be prepared for the skeptics of the world. Critics of home-school partnership policies will tell you that you can't legislate the attitudes of parents or educators. Our national experience with mandated parent advisory councils has revealed "that policy cannot mandate the things that really matter"; it will take both policy and attitude change (McLaughlin &Shields, 1987).

b. Others will tell you that policies take too long to develop or that your district already has too many policies that no one pays any attention to. Still other critics will point to the need for a national family resource policy, not an individual school district policy (Health & McLaughlin, 1987).

c. Policies will not help if they are not supported at every stage from development through implementation and maintenance. Make certain that your school district is willing to support policies on home-school partnerships and has broad input from parents, teachers, and community members in the development and implementation of policy. Each district's policy should reflect its own community. While the policies you've studied can be instructive; in the final analysis, you need to be certain that your policies are tailor-made to your local situation.

F-19

Activity #5: Case Studies of School District Policies

Directions and Procedures: 2 Hour Version:

1. Ask: *"What are some alternative ways that school districts can support parent involvement policy?"*

   Point out to participants that the focus here is upon what can be done at the district level -- by the school board, the superintendent, and the central office staff -- to support the different kinds of parent involvement programs and activities that operate in individual schools. Our focus is still upon ways and means that districts can enable and support implementation of written policies while allowing flexibility and latitude for each school to develop the programs that best serve its constituents.

2. Select one case study that you think will hold the greatest interest and value for your audience. Allocate time for individual reading and reflection. Instruct participants to identify the various strategies for supporting policies and decide to which of the three stages--development, implementation, or maintenance--each identified strategy relates.

3. Next, divide participants into groups of four or six participants. Instruct groups to begin their discussion and analysis of the assigned case study. Ask participants to analyze the district's use of each strategy by considering the following issues. Refer participants to Activity Sheet 14 in their workbook. **Use T-16.**

   a. How was the strategy implemented?
   b. What are the potential benefits and liabilities of the strategy--including costs and other resource requirements?
   c. What evidence of effect or positive impact is presented?
   d. To what extent does the strategy appear to be transportable to other districts?

4. A recorder from each group will report on one of the four questions listed above.

3 1/2 Hour Version:

1. Ask: *"What are some alternative ways that school districts can support parent involvement policy?"*

   Point out to participants that the focus here is upon what can be done at the district level -- by the school board, the superintendent, and the central office staff -- to support the different kinds of parent involvement programs and activities that operate in individual schools. Our focus is still upon ways and means that districts can enable and support implementation of written policies while allowing flexibility and latitude for each school to develop the programs that best serve its constituents.

Leaders Note: Ask how many have previously participated in a jigsaw learning group. This will cue you as to how much explanation regarding the jigsaw process you'll need to provide. If these participants have been involved in Workshop: "School Programs and Practices that Foster Home Learning," they will have already participated in a jigsaw activity and should require minimal overview and directions.)

2. Explain to participants that they will be using the jigsaw, a cooperative learning technique, to explore four case studies abstracts, which describe how local school districts have supported parent involvement.

   Overview jigsaw, explaining the functions of the two different groups that will be used in the process: the home groups and the expert study groups. You'll need to make it clear to participants that each one will have the opportunity to read, discuss, and become "expert" regarding one of the four case studies and that the context for this study will be the expert study group. Further, participants need to know that they'll be responsible for "teaching" their home group members about their case study and for "learning" about the other case studies by listening to other home group members' reports. Tell them that they'll begin by receiving their case study assignments in their home groups, and that they'll then "regroup," moving to an expert study group where they'll meet with other participants who have been assigned their same case study. They'll spend about 20 minutes in the expert study group, reading and discussing; then, everyone will return to their original home group where they'll report and listen to others report so that eventually they'll be familiar with each of the four case studies. **Use T-17.**

3. After you've given an overview of the jigsaw process, have participants form small groups comprised of at least four persons, noting that these will be the home groups. In a workshop of 20 participants, you would establish 5 home groups of 4 members each; a workshop of 24 participants would have 6 home groups, etc. In the likely event that the total number of participants is not divisible by 4, you'll need to assign two participants in a home group the same case study. (Note: You may have participants form home groups by simply numbering off, by grouping with those already seated near them, etc.)

4. When the home groups are formed, direct participants to Activity Sheets 10-13, found in their Workbooks, each of which is a separate case study abstract. Instruct home groups to assign a case study to each of their participants by either numbering off or allowing members to choose the case study they'd most like to learn about. You'll need to designate an area (or table) in the room for each of the four expert groups, and have participants move, one group at a time, to form these groups.

5. Suggest that each expert group name a discussion leader/facilitator,and then proceed to read their assigned case study. Tell them that you've allocated 10 minutes for individual reading and reflection. Instruct them to identify the various strategies for supporting policies that appear in their case study and to decide to which of the three stages—policy development, policy implementation, or policy maintenance -- each identified strategy relates.

6. At the end of **10 minutes,** call time, and instruct expert groups to begin their discussion and analysis of their assigned case study. Suggest that they prepare for their reports back to their home groups by first developing a comprehensive list of strategies, grouped by stages. Then they should go back through the list and analyze the district's use of each strategy by considering the questions on Transparency 17.

   Place **T-17** on the overhead projector to direct the expert group's discussion. Tell participants they will have 10 minutes to discuss and prepare for reporting back in their respective home groups. Refer participants to Activity Sheet 14 in their Workbook.

7. At the end of 10 minutes, call time and instruct participants to return to their home groups where they are to share what they've learned in a round-robin reporting fashion. Suggest that each expert take 2-3 minutes to overview the assigned case study and respond to questions from other group members. Each home group will need to assign a facilitator to assure that each "expert" has equal reporting time. 15 minutes are allocated for this part of the activity; the workshop leader should circulate, "listen in" to group reports/discussions, help with pacing by informing groups of time remaining, etc.

8. When 15 minutes have elapsed, ask participants to end home group discussion. Instruct them to take a couple of minutes to jot down on their note pads ideas, questions, or prompts that they'd like to pursue after the workshop session, focusing on those learnings they'd like to use in their district. Allow 2-3 minutes for writing, then invite participants to share their learnings and insights with the whole group.

Activity #6: Summary, Evaluation, and Follow-Up Ideas

Directions and Procedures: 2 Hour Version

1. Now direct participants to Activity Sheet # 15, "Checklist of Your District's Policies," and ask them to complete this checklist to the best their ability. Note: If district teams are attending the workshop let them work together as a whole group while leader facilitates. Otherwise, instruct participants to complete this individually. Allow 3-5 minutes for this culminating activity, and challenge participants to take this checklist back to their district for further consideration, discussion, and action.

2. Have participants fill out two copies of the Next Steps form (to be found in Participant Workbook). Each participant will take one copy with them and leave one with the workshop leader.

   You may want to provide carbon paper.
   Allow 4-5 minutes for this activity.

   *Fill out question #1 only
   * Post each person's policy areas
   *Pair those on similar interests and allow time for discussion on question #2-3

3. Finally, ask participants to locate the Participant Evaluation Form (last page in Participant Workbook), and allow the final few minutes for participants to complete and return this form.

4. Thank the group for their participation, and encourage them to take their learnings, insights, and commitments back to colleagues unable to attend. Challenge them to take some positive step toward renewed district support within the next 3 weeks.

3 1/2 Hour Version

1. Conclude the workshop by returning participants to the key concepts, purpose and objectives. (Refer to the Overview in the Participant Workbook. Write any learnings, insights, and/or commitments they ahve developed as a result of their participation.

2. Direct participants to share with others in their small table groups at least one significant learning, insight, or commitment they will take away. Table groups should designate a recorder/reporter to summarize members' sharing. When all members have shared in the small group, ask them to take another minute or two to formulate any lingering questions or concerns they may have about district-level support of home-school partnerships.

3. Proceed with directions in 2 Hour Version.

F-23

WORKSHOP LEADERS EVALUATION FORM

Building Home-School Partnerships for Learning

Leader's Name: ______________________________ Date Given: _____

Name of Workshop: ____________________ Amount of Time Used: ____

School District: ________________________________ State: _____

1. What was the most successful aspect of this workshop? Why?

2. What was the least successful? Why?

3. Did you change or cut out any parts of this workshop? If yes (a) which parts, b) what changes did you make, and (c) why did you change or cut them?

4. If this workshop is revised, what should be changed about:
    a. instructions in leader's guide

    b. workbook materials

    c. times allotted to activities

5. Other comments? Please continue on other side.

Thank you for giving us your thoughts on your experience with this workshop. May we have your phone number in case we need further information? Phone: ____________________

F-25

School District Policies and Supports for Home-School Partnerships

TRANSPARENCIES

T-1	Sourcebook Themes
T-2	Key Concept
T-3	Workshop Purpose
T-4	Learner Objective
T-5	Workshop Overview
T-6A/B	NCPIE Guidelines on Parent Involvement Programs
T-7	Chapter One Requirements
T-8	Sample Policy Questions
T-9	NCPIE Guidelines for Developing Policy
T-10	NCPIE Guidelines for Implementing Policy
T-11	NCPIE Guidelines for Maintaining Policy
T-12	Typology of Supports
T-13	NSBA Guidelines for Developing Policy
T-14	NSBA Guidelines for Implementing Policy
T-15	NSBA Guidelines for Maintaining Policy
T-16	Case Study Questions
T-17	Directions for Case Study Jigsaw

F-26

T-1

Sourcebook Themes

1. Family Strengths
2. Home-School Partnerships
3. Home Learning Environments
4. Home Learning Activities

T-2

KEY CONCEPT

Policy and support for policy are necessary for effective home-school partnership programs.

F-28

T-3

PURPOSE

To provide knowledge on the development of

district policies and supports for policies to ensure effective

home-school partnership programs.

F-29

T-4

LEARNER OBJECTIVES

1. Define and describe "policy" and "supports for policy".
2. Discuss at least 2 board policies on home-school partnerships.
3. Describe efforts of 2 different school districts to support policy on parent involvement.
4. Identify key components of policy and support for policy on parent involvement.

F-30

T-5

WORKSHOP OVERVIEW

1. DEVELOPING POLICY
2. SUPPORTING POLICIES
    A. DEVELOPING SUPPORTS
    B. IMPLEMENTING SUPPORTS
    C. MAINTAINING SUPPORTS

F-31

T-6A

NCPIE GUIDELINES

A. General Parameters

1. Provisions for parental input when designing programs.

2. Provisions for non-English speaking parents and those deficient in literacy skills.

3. Programs for parents at all grade levels.

4. Programs that recognize family diversity.

F-32

T-6B

NCPIE GUIDELINES

B. Program Requirements

5. Regular reports on children's progress and on curriculum objectives.

6. Opportunities for parents to assist with instruction at home and at school.

C. Resource Considerations

7. Training for teachers and staff.

8. Linkages with social service and community agencies serving families and children.

F-33

T-7

CHAPTER ONE REQUIREMENTS

1. Make Chapter One Local Education Agency (LEA) personnel available to parents;
2. Convene an annual meeting with parents;
3. Provide information on program to parents;
4. Make parents aware of program requirements;
5. Provide information in a language that parents can understand.

F-34

T-8

SAMPLE POLICY QUESTIONS

1. What are the goals of this policy and how clearly are they defined?
2. What steps does the policy say will be taken to achieve these goals?
3. Is there any reference to resources needed?
4. How well does this policy meet the NCPIE guidelines? Chapter One requirements?
5. Which elements of this policy would be the most useful for your school district?

T-9

NCPIE GUIDELINES

DEVELOPING POLICY

1. Assess parent needs and interests
2. Set clear and measurable goals based on parent and community input

F-36

T-10

NCPIE GUIDELINES

IMPLEMENTING POLICY

1. Hire and train a parent liaison.
2. Develop public information and relations component for parent involvement program.
3. Recognize the importance of the community's unique cultural attributes while developing and marketing the program.
4. Use creative forms of communications.
5. Mobilize parents as volunteers.
6. Provide training in " partnership" approach.

F-37

T-11

NCPIE GUIDELINES

MAINTAINING POLICY

1. Integrate information and assistance with other programs.
2. Flexible scheduling
3. Evaluation

T-12

TYPOLOGY OF SUPPORTS

DEVELOPMENT	IMPLEMENTATION	MAINTENANCE

F-38

F-39

T-13

NSBA GUIDELINES

I. DEVELOPING POLICY

A. Assess current policies and needs.

1. Review current successful policies to determine key elements.

2. Ask for input from parents.

3. Assess district needs and goals.

F-40

T-14

NSBA GUIDELINES

II. IMPLEMENTING POLICY

A. Communicate the Policy

1. Inform staff, parents and community of policy.
2. Use a variety of communication methods.

B. Develop a Plan to Implement Policy

1. Assign specific responsibilities for implementing the program.
2. Obtain materials from other parent involvement programs.
3. Establish priorities. (long & short-term goals)

F-41

T-15

NSBA GUIDELINES

III. MAINTAINING POLICY

A. Evaluate the policy.

1. Evaluate the success of the program.
2. Review policy at regular intervals.
3. Revise policy regularly in light of evaluations.

F-42

T-16

CASE STUDY QUESTIONS

1. How was each strategy implemented?

2. What appear to be the potential benefits and costs of the strategy?

3. What evidence of effect or positive impact is provided?

4. To what extent does the strategy seem to be transportable?

F-43

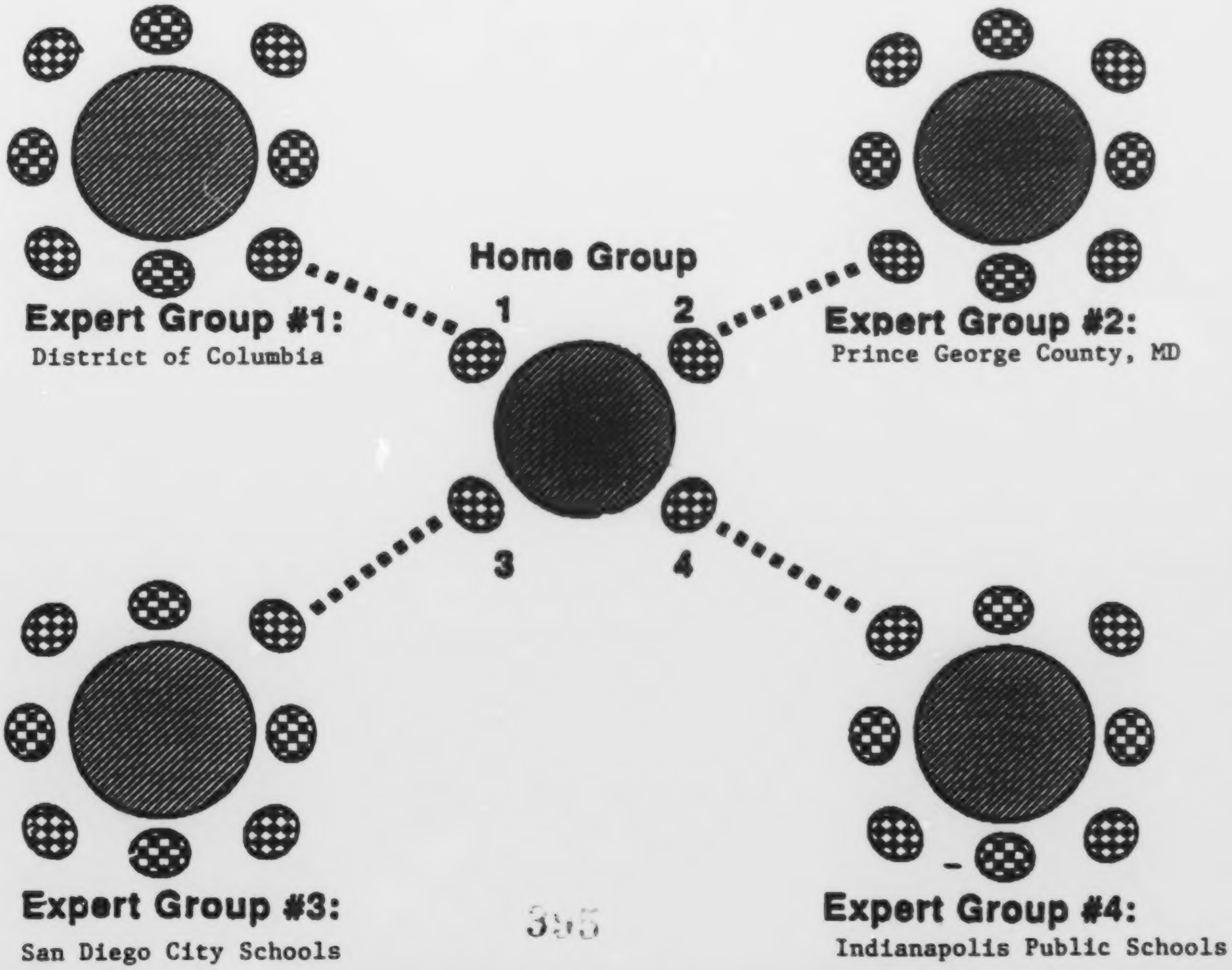
DIRECTIONS FOR CASE STUDY JIGSAW:

1. Meet in your Home Group. Each member number off from 1 through 4.

2. Read Expert Group assignment.

3. Move into Expert Groups (all 1's, all 2's, etc.). Plan a five minute presentation on the reading material.

4. Move back to your Home Group. Teach the other members your content.


Home Group
1
2
3
4
Expert Group #1:
District of Columbia
Expert Group #2:
Prince George County, MD
Expert Group #3:
San Diego City Schools
Expert Group #4:
Indianapolis Public Schools

F-44

Building Home-School Partnerships for Learning: Workshop for Urban Educators (Pilot Version)

School District Policies and Supports for Home-School Partnerships

Participant Workbook

Table of Contents

Overview
Key Concept, Rationale and Purpose, and Learner Objectives

Activity Sheets
1. Developing Family/School Partnerships: Guidelines for School and School Districts, National Coalition for Parent Involvement in Education (NCPIE)
2. Chapter 1 Information: Policy Manual and Flexibility Guideline Excerpts
3. NSBA's Implications for School Board Policy
4. Board Policy: McAllen ISD
5. Board Policy: Los Angeles Unified School District
6. Board Policy: Baltimore City Public Schools
7. Board Policy: Pomona Unified School District
8. Board Policy: San Diego City Schools
9. Policy Questions
10. Case Study: District of Columbia Public Schools
11. Case Study: Prince George's County, Maryland
12. Case Study: San Diego City Schools, California
13. Case Study: Indianapolis Public Schools, Indiana
14. Case Study Questions
15. Checklist of Your District's Policies

Annotated Summaries from Research and Practice Literature

Next Steps (2 copies)

Participant Evaluation Form

F-45

OVERVIEW

KEY CONCEPT

District-level officials can make a major contribution to effective home-school partnerships and parent involvement in home learning. Key components of district-level plans for strengthening home-school partnerships are: (1) policies, and (2) supports for polices related to parent involvement.

RATIONALE AND PURPOSE

Policies and supports for policies on parent involvement in home-school partnerships and home learning are critical first steps for school districts interested in strengthening parent involvement. Home-school partnerships involve mutual collaboration between parents and educators in promoting student achievement. Educators need to take the lead in creating such partnerships.

The purpose of this workshop is to focus participant thinking on the importance of policies and supports for policies and to provide knowledge that would assist in the development of district policies and supports for these policies. Supports are needed for the development, implementation and maintenance of policies.

This workshop provides a framework for understanding the relationship between policies and the supports for these policies and programs. Examples of policies and supports for policies from school districts which have done substantial work in this area are utilized. Districts that develop parent involvement programs without developing policies and supports for policies risk losing their programs when administrations, funding, or other key factors change.

LEARNER OBJECTIVES

By the end of this workshop, participants will be able to:

1. Define and describe effective policies and supports for policies on home-school partnerships by reference to current research and literature.

2. Recall and discuss school board policies dealing with parent involvement from at least two different school districts.

3. Talk about the strategies and resources used by at least two different school districts to support policy about parent involvement.

4. Identify and explain the key components of policy and support for policy about parent involvement.

F-46

Activity Sheet 1

DEVELOPING FAMILY/SCHOOL PARTNERSHIPS:

GUIDELINES FOR SCHOOLS AND SCHOOL DISTRICTS

NCPIE

National Coalition for Parent Involvement in Education

Introduction:

The National Coalition for Parent Involvement in Education (NCPIE) is dedicated to the development of family/school partnerships. Based on the broad experience of NCPIE members, this brochure recommends specific ways teachers, administrators, and community leaders can strengthen relationships between schools and parents.

By exchanging information, sharing in decision making, helping at school, and collaborating in the child's learning, parents *can* become partners in the educational process. Research clearly shows that parent involvement encourages student achievement.

Certainly, federal and state leaders are increasingly aware of the pivotal role that parents and the community play in the education of our children. This is apparent in the Chapter 1 law and other federal programs that mandate consultation and collaboration with parents. Many state and district policies stipulate parent involvement not only for the Chapter 1 program but for other programs and grade levels as well.

As the momentum for ongoing, organized parent participation at the school and district level increases, so does the demand for parent involvement program information. What follows are some general policy suggestions, keys to successful programs, and specific program ideas.

What a Policy Should Include:

The formulation of policies should include input from teachers, administrators, parents, students, persons from youth-serving groups, and the community.

The policies should contain the following concepts:

- Opportunities for all parents to become informed about how the parent involvement program will be designed and carried out;
- Participation of parents who lack literacy skills or who do not speak English;
- Regular information for parents about their child's participation and progress in specific educational programs and the objectives of those programs;
- Opportunities for parents to assist in the instructional process at school and at home;
- Professional development for teachers and staff to enhance their effectiveness with parents;
- Linkages with social service agencies and community groups to address key family and community issues;
- Involvement of parents of children at all ages and grade levels;
- Recognition of diverse family structures, circumstances and responsibilities, including differences that might impede parent participation. The person(s) responsible for a child may not be the child's biological parent(s) and policies and programs should include participation by all persons interested in the child's educational progress.

F-47

Keys to Success:

Based on information from actual programs, there are several keys to successfully involving parents in school activities:

- Assess parent needs and interests about ways of working with the schools;
- Set clear and measurable goals with parent and community input;
- Hire and train a parent liaison to directly contact parents and coordinate parent activities. The liaison should be bilingual as needed and sensitive to the needs of parents and the community, including the non-English speaking community;
- Develop public relations to inform parents, businesses, and the community about parent involvement policies and programs through newsletters, slide shows, videotapes, local newspapers, and such;
- Recognize the importance of a community's historic, ethnic, linguistic, or cultural resources in generating interest in parent participation. Even when there are problems, such as desegregation issues, a parent involvement program can serve as a forum for discussion and a conduit for change;
- Use creative forms of communication between educators and parents. This may include parent/teacher conferences which yield individual parent/child and teacher/child plans, newsletters mailed to parents, etc;
- Mobilize parents as volunteers in the school assisting teachers with instructional tasks, assisting in the lunchroom, and helping with administrative office functions. Parents might act as volunteer tutors, classroom aides, and invited speakers;
- Train educators to include techniques for surmounting barriers between parents and schools so that teachers, administrators, and parents interact as partners;
- Integrate information and assistance with other aspects of the total learning environment. Parents should have access to information about such services as health care and nutrition programs provided by schools or community agencies;
- Schedule programs and activities flexibly to reach diverse parent groups;
- Evaluate the effectiveness of parent involvement programs and activities on a regular basis.

Program Ideas:

Parent involvement programs should match the needs of the school and the community. One or more of the following ideas might be used as a framework upon which to build specific programs. A comprehensive family-school partnership might incorporate the following concepts, as well as others not listed here.

1. **The Home Environment** — Emphasize home conditions that support a child's achievement in school. A child's own place of study, school supplies, proper diet, sufficient sleep, and rules governing such things as recreation, TV, and homework hours are important to educational progress.
2. **School-based Services** — Schools might offer use of facilities for community education and family services. For example, a variety of parent education programs could be offered on topics such as parenting skills, literacy, constructive discipline, nutrition and child/adolescent development.
3. **Learning Activities** — Parents can initiate learning activities that are not limited to academics but that also develop good study habits, conversational skills, sportsmanship, and problem solving ability. Teachers can guide parents in the use of curriculum-coordinated parent/child activities. These suggestions may include homework, skills practice, enrichment or other activities that support and complement the curriculum and enhance children's learning in school.
4. **Parent Assistance at the School** — Parents may help schools by: volunteering to tutor students, assisting with class trips, teaching mini-courses (computers, crafts, etc.), and discussing their careers with students. Other parents may help in the classroom, lunchroom, or administrative offices. Schools and parents can collaborate on special activities and assemblies. Among many possibilities are such things as "Community Education Day," parent/child summer activities, and a "Special Person Day," where children bring to school a person who is important to them.
5. **Parents as Advocates** — As members of advisory councils or other groups, parents can participate in school improvement plans, help develop school policy, and set priorities. These groups can also inform the community about school needs/goals.
6. **Two-Way School/Parent Communication** —
Parents should be given specific information on the academic year learning objectives and discipline codes and regular opportunities to discuss their child's progress. In addition to newsletters and conferences, some schools use recorded messages about such things as homework assignments and school activities to keep parents informed. Schools can develop partnerships with community-based organizations to reach out and bring in parents from diverse backgrounds.

Summary:

The organizations that collaborated on this brochure hope it will help schools and school districts to discuss and implement parent involvement policies. By publicizing information about existing programs, and by raising the issue among professional educators, NCPIE will encourage local school and community leaders

F-48

Activity Sheet 2A

CHAPTER 1 POLICY MANUAL

BASIC PROGRAMS OPERATED BY LOCAL EDUCATIONAL AGENCIES

Part A of Chapter 1 of Title I
Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965
amended by the
Augustus F. Hawkins-Robert T. Stafford
Elementary and Secondary School Improvement Amendments of 1988
(Public Law 100-297)

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Elementary and Secondary Education
Compensatory Education Programs

April 1990

(excerpts from this manual follow...)

INTRODUCTION

The Augustus F. Hawkins-Robert T. Stafford Elementary and Secondary School Improvement Amendments of 1988, Pub. L. 100-297, amended the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA). Part A of Chapter 1 of Title I, ESEA (Chapter 1), reauthorizes a program previously contained in Chapter 1 of the Education Consolidation and Improvement Act of 1981 (ECIA). Part A of Chapter 1 provides financial assistance through State educational agencies (SEAs) to local educational agencies (LEAs) to meet the special educational needs of educationally deprived children in school attendance areas and schools with high concentrations of children from low-income families and the needs of children in local institutions for neglected or delinquent (N or D) children. This assistance is to improve the educational opportunities of educationally deprived children by helping them succeed in the regular program, attain grade-level proficiency, and improve achievement in basic and more advanced skills that all children are expected to master.

PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

Introduction

Section 1016 of Chapter 1 implements Congress' findings that activities by schools to increase parental involvement are a vital, integral part of Chapter 1 programs. Toward this end, an LEA may receive Chapter 1 funds only if it implements programs, activities, and procedures for the involvement of parents of participating public and private school children in its Chapter 1 program. This involvement must include, but is not limited to, parental input into the planning, design, and implementation of the LEA's Chapter 1 program.

The activities and procedures for parental involvement must be planned and implemented with the meaningful consultation of parents of participating children. The consultation must be organized, ongoing, systematic, informed, and timely in relation to decisions about the program. Procedures for how this will be done throughout the life of the Chapter 1 program must be documented in written policy that the LEA makes available to the parents of participating children. To be meaningful, parental involvement must be based on adequate information that should include, on a continuing and timely basis, proposed and final applications, needs assessment documents, budgetary information, evaluation data, copies of local, State, and Federal laws, regulations, and guidelines, and any other information needed for effective involvement.

Involvement of this type requires that LEAs--

- Make Chapter 1 LEA education personnel, including pupil services personnel, available to parents;
- Convene a districtwide or building-level annual meeting of the parents of participating children as well as providing opportunities for regular meetings;
- Provide timely information about the program to parents;
- Make parents aware of parental involvement requirements and other relevant provisions of the program; and
- Provide information, to the extent practicable, in a language and form that parents can understand.

An LEA's parental involvement program must include such activities as training parents to work with their children in the home and to understand program requirements; training parents, teachers, and principals to build partnerships between home and school; and training teachers, principals, and other staff

(LEA: Local Education Agency)

members involved in the program to work effectively with the parents of participating children.

An LEA is also required, through consultation with parents, to assess the effectiveness of parental involvement efforts and to determine if modifications are needed to increase parental participation. This assessment must be done annually.

The regulations clarify that allowable Chapter 1 costs include those to support parent conferences; resource centers; training programs, including expenditures associated with attending the training sessions; reporting to parents on children's progress; hiring, training, and utilization of parental involvement liaison workers; training of personnel, including pupil services personnel; use of parents as classroom volunteers, tutors, and aides; school-to-home complementary curriculums; assistance in implementing home-based educational activities; the provision of information on the Chapter 1 program as well as the provision of responses to parental recommendations; and the solicitation of parents' suggestions in the planning, development, and operation of the program.

Q1. How should an LEA document parental input into the planning, design, and implementation of the Chapter 1 program?

A. To receive Chapter 1 funds, an LEA must implement programs, activities, and written procedures for the involvement of parents of participating public and private school children. Some of the ways that this requirement can be documented are as follows:

- A description in the project application of the consultation with parents in the development and approval of the project.
- Agenda and minutes for activities such as the annual meeting of parents of participating children and for regular meetings of parents to obtain input into the program.
- Schedules of training sessions designed for parents.
- Financial records that reflect a budget and expenditures for parental involvement activities.
- Sign-in sheets from meetings and training sessions.

Q5. What should an LEA's written policies for parental involvement include?

A. An LEA's written policies should define--

- The procedures and types of activities for involving parents in the planning, design, and implementation of the Chapter 1 program;
- The specific goals of the LEA for its parental involvement programs and activities;

- The procedures for assessing the LEA's parental involvement program; and
- The procedures and types of activities for parental involvement in program aspects other than in the planning, design, and implementation of the Chapter 1 program, such as involving parents directly in the education of their children.

Q6. Must written policies be signed by the superintendent, the Board, and parents?

A. No. There is no Federal requirement that the policies be signed.

Q7. Is an official parent handbook required to document these written policies?

A. No.

Q8. How should the written policies be shared with staff and parents of participating children?

A. While the LEA is not required to distribute copies of the written policies to all staff and parents, it must make them available to parents of participating children and should make them available to all staff. An LEA should develop, with the involvement of parents, a method for ensuring that the policies are understood by parents.

Q10. Must LEAs discuss the criteria for student selection and specific instructional objectives for each child with parents?

A. Yes. An LEA must ensure that the parents of participating children are informed about the reasons why their children are participating in Chapter 1, and about the specific instructional objectives of the program as well as the methods used to achieve those objectives. In addition, the LEA must also provide the parents of participating children with reports on their children's progress and, to the extent practical, conduct a parent-teacher conference with the parents of each participating child to discuss the child's progress, placement, and methods the parents can use to complement the child's instruction.

Q11. What "other staff" may be involved in training designed to prepare them to work effectively with the parents of participating children?

A. Both Chapter 1 and non-Chapter 1-funded staff members who are involved in the Chapter 1 program such as counselors, nurses, speech therapists, librarians, and social workers may receive training to assist them to work effectively with the parents of participating children.

F-52

Activity Sheet 2B

CHAPTER 1
FLEXIBILITY
A Guide to Opportunities in Local Projects

U.S. Department of Education
Office of Elementary and Secondary Education
Compensatory Education Programs

February 1992

FOREWORD

The U.S. Department of Education encourages educators and the public to learn about the flexibility that is built into federal programs. With this information, educators can tailor federally assisted services to supplement regular schooling activities and also support broader improvements in educational programs.

John T. MacDonald
John T. MacDonald
Assistant Secretary for
Elementary and Secondary Education

Mary Jean LeTendre
Mary Jean LeTendre
Director
Compensatory Education Programs

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

The guide describes areas of flexibility authorized in Chapter 1 that can assist educators in implementing Chapter 1 projects. It should be used as a source of ideas. To implement this flexibility, please refer to the Chapter 1 statute, regulations, and policy manual. These documents contain additional requirements and considerations that may affect the manner in which the flexibility is implemented. Please consult the statute, regulations, and policy manual for specific guidance in each area of flexibility.

(excerpts from this guide follow...)

INVOLVING THE PARENTS OF CHAPTER 1 STUDENTS

Districts that receive Chapter 1 funds are required to involve the parents of Chapter 1 students in project-related activities. Accordingly, Chapter 1 funds may be used to conduct a wide variety of services that promote parent participation. These include activities that encourage contact between the home and the Chapter 1 project, involve parents in school activities, and develop parents' skills in assisting their children with schoolwork.

Districts attempting to increase the involvement of Chapter 1 parents in their children's schooling may use Chapter 1 funds for a variety of activities. For example, districts may use Chapter 1 funds to pay a parent of a participating student to serve as a Chapter 1 classroom aide. In addition, districts may use Chapter 1 funds to pay for parents to attend conferences that train them to conduct home-based educational activities and participate more effectively in the local Chapter 1 project. Districts may also use Chapter 1 funds to establish a Chapter 1 resource center (within or outside of school) for parents to prepare materials to use in improving their children's skills. Other activities for parental involvement in Chapter 1 include parent conferences; reporting to parents on their children's progress; hiring, training, and utilizing parental involvement liaison workers; training of personnel; the provision of Chapter 1 program information as well as responses to parent recommendations; and the solicitation of parents' suggestions in planning, developing, and operating the program.

For the facilitation of parental involvement in Chapter 1, reasonable Chapter 1 expenditures for refreshments during parent meetings and training, particularly when the sessions run through mealtime, are allowable. Other allowable Chapter 1 expenditures include the transportation cost to and from meetings when parents cannot afford it and the cost of babysitting services when necessary in order to support the parents' attendance and to enable them to more effectively participate in the program.

Innovation Projects

Innovation projects offer other forms of flexibility by enabling a district to use up to and including 5 percent of its Chapter 1 funds to:

- train Chapter 1 and non-Chapter 1 teachers and librarians to understand and address the special needs of Chapter 1 students and ways of integrating Chapter 1 activities into the regular classroom;
- encourage parental involvement through innovative approaches or the expansion of exemplary programs;
- encourage the involvement of community and private sector resources in meeting the needs of educationally disadvantaged children; and

For additional guidance on the flexibilities contained in Chapter 1, school districts should contact their respective State Departments of Education.

Activity Sheet 3

IMPLICATIONS FOR SCHOOL BOARD POLICY

Both parents and school boards are becoming increasingly aware of the benefits of parent involvement programs. Districts are developing a variety of programs to foster relations between families and the schools.

For such programs to have any long-term effect, however, they must grow out of a school board policy that has been carefully planned, clearly communicated, and consistently evaluated. This summary chapter outlines some of the considerations for school boards as they work to enhance parent involvement in their own schools.

Step 1: Assess Current Policies and Needs

Review current policies that may affect parent involvement in your district's schools. Look at both successful and unsuccessful parent involvement programs. Why are some programs working?

Ask for parent input in this process. Work with local PTA leaders, for example, to find out what school district policies and practices hinder the participation of parents in school activities. Be sure to involve a broad range of parents.

Assess district needs. What are school district goals? The New York State School Boards Association has developed a Policy and Practice Needs Assessment instrument that may be a valuable tool in your district's assessment procedure.

Once your district goals are clearly in mind, evaluate how effectively existing programs help achieve those goals. In Miami, for example, one district goal is to raise student scores on statewide achievement tests. As a result, activities on the parent calendars are specifically designed to reinforce skills that are tested. Parents know that they have a responsibility for helping their children be successful in the tests. Consider changing demographics as part of the planning process. How will changing population trends affect existing programs? What new programs may the board need to develop?

Step 2: Establish Board Policy and the Board's Commitment to that Policy

Follow a comprehensive process in drafting, developing, and adopting board policies on parent involvement. Allow many opportunities for parent and community input. Establish clear goals; consider a variety of alternative approaches to meeting those goals. For example, if a goal is "to ensure that parents know what their children are learning," possible strategies to meet the goal might include:

— improving information on report cards
— regular letters to parents
— providing funds to support evening teacher visits to children's homes
— an increase in formal communications, such as newsletters.

In some cases, the school district itself may not be the only institution that can effectively meet the need. For example, school districts that identify "increasing teacher knowledge about the importance of parent involvement in education" as a goal may consider:

- working through the state school boards association to change certification requirements to include a course on the educational impact of parent involvement in education
- working through the state school boards association with state colleges and universities to develop preservice and inservice curricula for teachers

Define roles for parents clearly. In some areas, school boards are prohibited by policy, contractual, or legal constraints from sharing any decision-making authority. In other areas, however, parent input may serve a valuable function. Examples of policy areas in which decision-making is increasingly being shared include:

— setting guidelines for community use of schools
— discussing budget priorities
— planning and evaluating extracurricular activities
— hiring school principals
— reviewing proposed new school programs.

Ann Kahn, former school board member and president of the National PTA, has seen parent involvement in decision-making from both sides. She points out that school boards are legally obligated to *make policy*. Parents, however, can have input during policy formulation and can participate in making decisions *within that policy*.

John Goodlad's *A Study of Schooling* outlines the kind of role most parents want to play in school decision-making:

> Polls and surveys shows that [parents] would like a greater say in the affairs of their schools. But

F-55

> this does not mean that parents want to take over the schools. Some do, but most don't. Rather, they want to be kept informed in as clear a fashion as possible, especially about their children's progress and welfare. Further, they want the decisions and those who make them to be visible. They would prefer to leave the running of the school to the principal, and the classrooms to teachers and, if possible, to hold them accountable. . . . Most would increase the decision-making role of parents, parent associations, and lay advisory councils. But they would not elevate their authority above the professional individuals and groups or the board.

Of course, not *all* parents agree with Goodlad's statement. Some activist parents want to serve not only in an advisory role, but to make policy themselves. Nonetheless, the latest Gallup Poll on Education and the 1987 Metropolitan Life Survey confirm that parents want increased *involvement*, but not increased *authority*.

Support policies with budgetary resources. Successful parent involvement programs require a substantial commitment from parents. The district should be willing to assume an equal responsibility for providing resources such as staff, training, or increased communication.

Affirm the board's commitment to the new policy both within and outside the school system.

Stress the benefits of parent involvement. Let parents, teachers, and the community know the goals of any program.

Step 3: Communicate the Policy

Understand the importance of communication. "Often school boards may think they can put off giving time and attention to their communication responsibilities, especially when the school system does not face a major crisis," said Nick Goble, assistant executive director of the Pennsylvania School Boards Association. "However, major crises are often caused by a lack of communication."

Start by communicating the policy. . .and the board's commitment to it. . .to all school staff members. Previous chapters have shown that school administrators and teachers can be one of the greatest strengths of a parent involvement program—or one of its biggest obstacles. If inservice training is needed, provide financial support.

Use a variety of communication methods to let parents know about the new policy. Radio and television announcements, speeches to community organizations, flyers sent home from school, and even notices inserted in grocery bags are all possibilities.

Step 4: Develop a Plan to Implement the Policy

Assign specific responsibilities for implementing the program. Will a board committee be needed? How will local PTAs be involved? If additional staff or budget are needed, establish a plan for making them available.

Obtain materials from other parent involvement programs. If elements from an existing program can be adapted to your district's needs, the process of implementation will be faster and easier.

Establish priorities. In the beginning, for example, it may be helpful to ask parents to work on resolving immediate school problems, rather than long-standing issues. As parents experience success, they will be better able to examine longer-range concerns.

Step 5: Evaluate the Policy

Build in an evaluation component to any parent involvement program. The evaluation should be designed to determine how successful the program is in reaching its stated goals. Evaluation components might include:

— short questionnaires to all parents
— in-depth questionnaires to a sample of parents
— interviews with parents
— examination of achievement data
— reports from teachers and principals

Plan to review the policy at regular intervals. A task force of parents might be authorized to review the policy during its first year of implementation, for example.

Revise policy and programs regularly in light of evaluations. ■

Excerpt from First Teachers: Parental Involvement in the Public Schools.
Alexandria, VA: National School Boards Association. Nov. 1988.
Used with permission.

F-56

Activity Sheet 4

Mc Allen Texas Independent School District Policy

The Goals of the Mc Allen ISD Parent Involvement Program:

- To provide effective and positive communications between schools, home, and community.
- To promote parent and community involvement so that parents and community members become effective partners in the improvement of Mc Allen schools.
- To provide parenting education, awareness, training programs and activities that are beneficial for parents and their children.

The Objectives of the Mc Allen ISD Parent Involvement Program:

- To develop mutually beneficial partnerships between schools and community entities.
- To provide educational programs that strengthen parenting skills and help parents to provide educational assistance to their children.
- To expand linkages with social, educational, health and other human resource agencies.
- To implement special evening educational programs for parents and students.
- To meet the needs of "At-Risk" students and their parents.
- To keep parents better informed about school and community resources.
- To increase communication between teachers and parents regarding the academic performance and development of students.
- To develop parents' confidence and ability so that they may become effective leaders in school and community activities.

Activity Sheet 4 - page 2

The District's Chapter 1 program shall be planned, designed, and implemented with meaningful consultation with parents of participating students. This consultation shall be organized, systematic, ongoing, informed, and timely in relation to decisions about the program. To this end the District shall:

1. Develop written policies, after consultation with and review by parents, to ensure parental involvement, including the District's commitment to give timely responses to recommendations by parents, and make those policies parents of participating students.
2. Convene an annual meeting, to which all parents of participating students are invited, to explain the programs and activities provided in the Chapter 1 program.
3. Provide parents with reports of their children's progress.
4. To the extent practical, conduct a parent-teacher conference with the parents of each student to discuss the student's progress, placement, and methods the parent can use to complement instruction.
5. Make Chapter 1 personnel readily accessible to parents.
6. Permit parents to observe Chapter 1 program activities.
7. If parents desire, provide opportunities for regular parent meetings to formulate parental input to the program.
8. Provide parents with timely information about the program.
9. Make parents aware of parental involvement requirements and other relevant program matters.
10. Provide reasonable support for parental involvement activities, as parents may request.
11. Coordinate, to the extent possible, parental activities.
12. To the extent practicable, provide information, programs and activities for parents in a language and form that the parents understand.
13. Through consultation with parents, annually assess the effectiveness of the parent involvement program and determine what action needs to be taken, if any, to increase parental participation.

F-58

Activity Sheet 5

Los Angeles Unified School District

PART II: DISTRICTWIDE PARENT-INVOLVEMENT POLICY

POLICY STATEMENT

The Los Angeles Unified School District recognizes that when schools and parents form strong partnerships, our children's potential for educational success improves significantly. Teachers and school administrators become more aware of parent and community expectations and are more responsive to suggestions on program operations. Parents learn the scope of the school's instructional program and set high expectations for their children. As a result, schools focus more sharply on student growth and success.

Schools have the responsibility to involve parents in this partnership. The Los Angeles Unified School District therefore supports a variety of parent-involvement programs that require schools to involve parents at all grade levels in a broad range of roles. These programs will be coordinated through the District's Parent Involvement Unit.

The responsibility and accountability for implementing the districtwide parent-involvement policy will be shared among board members, central and regional offices, local schools and their communities, and parents.

COMPONENTS OF THE POLICY

Six interrelated components are comprised in the policy: (1) parent participation, (2) communication, (3) parent training, (4) community resources, (5) policy guidelines and mandates, and (6) monitoring and evaluation. Below we describe each component as well as specific activities that could be included under the component. Local schools (A), region or division offices (B), or District offices (C) will have the responsibility for carrying out these activities.

1. Parent Participation

The primary objective of the parent participation component is to develop strategies to facilitate the active involvement of parents in the education of their children. Our focus will be on helping parents acquire more effective parenting practices that support school success. Activities include:

- Establish strategies for home-school partnerships. (A)
- Research and implement strategies to involve nonparticipating parents. (A)
- Develop and implement a local plan for increasing parent involvement. (A)
- Solicit feedback from parents as part of a needs assessment. (A)

- o Plan Open House, Back-to-School Night, and parent conferences at local schools. (A)

2. Communication

The successful implementation of the parent-involvement policy will require effective ongoing two-way communication between parents and the following groups: schools; regional offices; administrative offices; board members; community groups and churches, with sensitivity to language and cultural needs; business groups; and public agencies. The communication component will facilitate this interaction by gathering, compiling, and distributing parent-involvement information to schools and offices. Specific activities include:

- o Inform all parents of the District's parent-involvement policy on an annual basis. (A,B,C)
- o Disseminate effective models of parent involvement to schools for possible adoption. (B)
- o Provide parents with opportunities to get acquainted with other parents and involve community persons and school staff (e.g., cafeteria staff, custodial, clerical, educators, etc.) (A)
- o Share and develop with parents the vision, mission, and implementation of the school's instructional delivery program. (A)
- o Provide information regarding existing programs. (A,B)
- o Establish a parent and community bulletin board at each school site. (A)
- o Facilitate communication by utilizing teleconferences and other technologies. (B,C)
- o Encourage the establishment of a speakers' bureau for parents. (B,C)
- o Make individual school profiles available to parents and community members, including schoolwide grade-level student achievement. (A)
- o Make students' individual profiles available to their parents. (A)
- o Use technology to develop a centralized file system that contains language interpretations (professionally developed) of major District documents related to parent involvement and to provide a computerized list of translators. (C)
- o Purchase translation kits in order to provide communication in the various languages. (B)

This Districtwide Parent Involvement Policy document also describes these other components of the Policy: Parent Training, Community Resources, Policy Mandates and Guidelines, and Monitoring and Evaluation. It also contains a short introduction on background and research.

F-60

Activity Sheet 6
Baltimore City Public Schools
Community Involvement Policy Statement

Rationale

In order to establish collaboration between neighborhoods and schools, the schools must develop and expand effective community involvement programs. Increase involvement in all schools by civic, business, university, church, fraternal, and parent groups will create a positive bond, a tie that will produce a stronger educational system and improve the quality of life for the citizens of Baltimore.

Policy

The Baltimore City Public Schools system supports effective, continuing community involvement at all levels in every school. Schools will encourage this involvement, providing communication and training, decision making and collaboration, in a n effort to implement the school system's goals and to realize the plans of individual schools.

The Concept of Parent/Community Involvement

The Baltimore City Public School System recognizes that parent, community, business, and higher education involvement are critical to student development and to success in learning. The promotion of partnerships can lead to improving children's welfare and to improving scholastic achievement. In addition, inter-agency collaboration and community partnerships can provide essential support for school programs through human and physical resources and funding. The school system also recognizes that other city agencies play a critical role in supporting our goals, particularly in the areas of health, social services, and employment.

Research shows that schools in all communities are capable of mobilizing parents and the ongoing support of those parents will reinforce the school's curricular goals.

The Baltimore City Public Schools seeks to provide active participation in schools of parents, students, community members, businesses, and organizations. Through collaborative efforts with all concerned citizen groups, we seek a commitment to improve school climate and student achievement.

Comprehensive programs integrate parents both directly and indirectly. Current literature identifies five parent roles:

1. Parents as partners
2. Parents as collaborators and problem solvers
3. Parents as audience
4. Parents as supporters
5. Parents as advisors and co-decision makers

F-61

Activity Sheet 6 - page 2

Source: Beyond the Bake Sale, Anne T. Henderson, Carl L. Marburger, Theodora Ooms, National Committee for Citizens in Education.

Educational researchers divide parent involvement into five types:

1. Basic obligations of parents
2. Basic obligations of schools
3. Parent involvement at school
4. Parent involvement in learning activities at home
5. Parent involvement in...advocacy

Source: **"On Parents and Schools: A Conversation with Joyce Epstein,"** **Educational Leadership,** Vol. 47, 2, October 1989.

Each school is responsible for developing a plan to:

1. Increase Parent/Community Involvement
2. Increase Volunteers
3. Increase Partnerships

Staff and parent training should include the following:

- Communication Skills
- Advocacy
- Volunteerism
- Parent/Community Collaboration and Outreach
- Home Study Support
- Parent/Teacher Conferencing
- Invitational Education

Active parent and community support groups, working in close collaboration with staff and students, can improve student achievement and welfare.

Therefore, it is critical that each school create and implement an individual plan to achieve effective parent and community involvement.

F-62

Activity Sheet 7
Pomona (CA) Unified School District - Policy

Parent/Guardian Involvement

Parents/guardian of all children enrolled in the Pomona Unified School District shall have regular opportunities to make recommendations on the educational needs of their children and on ways in which they can help their children derive benefits from instruction.

The district shall invite all parents/guardians of eligible Chapter I children to attend at least one public meeting each year in order to discuss Chapter I programs and activities and solicit parents' input. Parents shall be informed of their right to consult in the design and implementation of Chapter I programs. The district shall assist parents in setting up a framework for networking among parents/guardians, teachers, and agency officials.

Each school site will be required to develop its own unique parent involvement program using guidelines (1 through 6) as stated below.

The Superintendent or designee shall ensure opportunities for parent/guardian involvement by means which shall include an annual evaluation of the following guidelines:

1. Helping parents develop parenting skills and foster conditions at home that support their children's efforts in learning. This may be accomplished through the development of parent training and informational brochures, workshops, etc. for parents of compensatory education students. The topics could include health and safety; school preparation for children; and building positive home conditions that support school learning and behavior.

2. Providing parents with the knowledge of techniques designed to assist their children in learning at home. Techniques to encourage include reading to children and listening to children read; encouraging study habits that include a regular time and place for homework; monitoring and assisting with homework as guided by teachers at each grade level; setting standards and limits for the use of time and social interactions of the students; conversing with children about school and other topics; and exploring curricular and career choices.

3. Providing access to and coordinating community and support services for children and families. This may include locating for parents and actively encouraging them to use community resource programs and agencies, examples of which are senior citizen tutorial programs, business/school partnerships, city/school partnerships, college work study/help programs, and library/museum programs.

Activity Sheet 7 - page 2

4. Promoting clear two-way communication between school and family about school programs and children's progress. This happens best when both school staff and parents freely initiate and promptly respond to communication requests. Activities to encourage are frequent discussions between teachers and parents; school newsletters; back-to-school/open house activities; and weekend informational workshops/training sessions.

The Governing Board recognizes that a child's education is a responsibility shared by school and family. To support the District mission to educate all students effectively and to their highest potential, schools and parents must work as partners.

Each school in the District shall have a program of parent involvement. This program will be designed to promote frequent, clear two-way communication between the school and family regarding their child's academic achievement, social progress and school programs; to provide parents with knowledge of effective parenting skills, school and community support services, and appropriate techniques to help their children learn at home; to support parents as decision makers and to develop their leadership in governance, advisory and advocacy roles; and to involve parents, through appropriate training, in instruction and support roles at the school.

Although parents are diverse in culture, language, and needs, they overwhelmingly share the school's commitment to the educational success of their children. This success cannot be the sole responsibility of a single program such as Chapter I or School Improvement or a group of individuals. All schools must involve parents at each grade level and in a variety of roles as part of the program of parent involvement.

Activity Sheet 8

F-64

PARENT INVOLVEMENT POLICY STATEMENT

The Board of Education recognizes the necessity and value of parent involvement to support student success and academic achievement. In order to assure collaborative partnerships between parents and schools, the board, working through the administration, is committed to:

a. involving parents as partners in school governance including shared decision making.

b. establishing effective two-way communication with all parents, respecting the diversity and differing needs of families.

c. developing strategies and programmatic structures at schools to enable parents to participate actively in their children's education.

d. providing support and coordination for school staff and parents to implement and sustain appropriate parent involvement from kindergarten through grade twelve.

e. utilizing schools to connect students and families with community resources that provide educational enrichment and support.

Activity Sheet 9

Policy Questions

A. What are the goals of this policy and how clearly are they defined?

B. What steps does this policy say will be taken to achieve these goals?

C. Is there any reference to resources needed?

D. How well does this policy meet the NCPIE guidelines?
Chapter One requirements?

E. Which elements of this policy would be the most useful for
your school district?

Developing Policy and Capacity for Parent Involvement in one Urban School District

C. Vannessa Spinner, Director
Parental Involvement, Volunteer and Community Services Unit
District of Columbia Public Schools

This paper will briefly describe the District of Columbia School System's development of a series of actions and strategies to increase parents involvement in the education of their children. It will focus on actions taken to date and immediate plans. Special focus will be given to those strategies which enable parents to enhance their capacity to support student success and become active partners in their child's success in school.

The D.C. Public School System is the fourteenth largest school district in the nation. Over 50 different languages and dialects are spoken by its students. Its parent population is as diverse as the demographics of the city. During the 1990 school year, a survey of fifty-two of the District's one hundred and eighty-three schools was conducted by the Washington Urban League for the Committee on Public Education, in order to provide concrete data on then current levels of parent and community participation. Forty elementary schools, eight junior high schools and four senior high schools were included. Each of the four quadrants of the city were represented, and every effort was made to include schools with varied levels of parent participation. Surveyed groups in each school included principals, staff working directly with parents and community, involved parents and non-parents and uninvolved parents. The study focused on questions regarding the nature of parent involvement, and/or the barriers to increased parent involvement in both the programs of the school and the education of individual students.

While there were major differences among schools, which appeared to be related to the socio-economic and education levels of parents, there were a number of factors which generally held true across the spectrum. Secondary schools had markedly lower levels of parent participation than elementary schools. The majority of involved parents focused their efforts in fundraising and/or indirect support areas. Less than two percent were involved in organized activities such as tutoring, homework assistance and enrichment of content which directly supported or enhanced instruction. However, thirty seven percent of the non-parent volunteers were involved in tutorial or instructional support activities. There were marked differences among principal, staff and parent perceptions of participation. However, all groups indicated basic service roles such as answering telephones, fundraising, club booster and similar activities as most appropriate for parents. In other words, functions involving even basic decision making were not viewed as appropriate by staff administrators or parents. Principals and parents identified discipline, homework, teaching and parent participation in the classroom as key areas in which they most differed. A central theme among all groups was the need for better communication between parents and teachers.

In its recommendations, the survey indicated that;

1) the school system needed to significantly enhance the level and types of parent participation both inside and outside the school setting;

2) attitudes of staff toward parent involvement required significant adjustment; and

3) parents are not generally viewed as members of the teaching team by either themselves or teachers and administrators.

Subsequently focus groups, comprised of parents and parent organization leaders, were held in the various sectors of the city. Results from these sessions revealed that parents viewed the attitudes of school staff as a major barrier to parent involvement. They also cited a lack of information and/or programs to assist parents in helping their children.

Concurrent with the activities of the Committee on Public Education and the administration's efforts to collect data on parent involvement, the Board of Education initiated a "Commission on Schools and the Community." The Commission analyzed current efforts systemwide, reviewed national policy data, and recommended a broad range of strategies to improve school/community relations. At the base of their recommendations was the desire to enhance parents' capacity to support individual student performance. The overall goal of the recommendations focused on developing the appropriate policies and administrative guidance to "promote greater student achievement by enabling schools and parents to become more productive partners in education of children." A pivotal recommendation involved the development of a) comprehensive parent/family involvement policy, b) administrative guidelines to include local school accountability factors and c) administrator/teacher training to support the development of new types of relationships between schools and their service users (i.e., parents and primary caretakers of students).

During school year 1990-91, a number of positive strategies were undertaken by the school district at both the administrative and local school level. The systemwide strategies included:

1. The development of uniform definitions for parent and community involvement and a matrix that categorized parent and school actions (see attached). Uniform definitions of the terms "parent involvement," "community

F-68

involvement," and "volunteer" were presented. Relevant guidelines and policies were cited. The matrix was designed to allow school staff to identify where a school ranked within a range of minimal to optimal involvement, based on a set of "actions initiated by parents" and a set of "actions initiated by the local school" at each level. The standard definition, coupled with the matrix, has led to a number of schools' identifying their current levels and seeking technical assistance in enhancing their relationships with parents and parent organizations.

2. The development and dissemination of a variety of standard outreach tools, such as information videos titled "Parent Tips," which focused on messages to parents about how to help their children be better learners. Tapes ran as public service announcements on network TV stations and local cable outlets. They were also disseminated to human services agencies. Other tools, such as standard parent handbooks and a series of camera ready papers titled "Parent Pointers," which focused on test preparation, helping with homework and other topics, were disseminated to all local schools.

3. The design and implementation of video training for local school administrators on how to manage parent and community involvement. The first videotape of a six tape series has been completed and field tested with local principals. After sharing the initial tape and study guide with the Committee on Public Education, local video contractors' services have been sought and obtained by the Committee to complete the series. The initial tape focused on having principals and parents identify barriers to involvement and strategies for increasing involvement. Subsequent tapes will focus on the six levels of involvement identified in the matrix (see above) and how to successfully transition through each level. The standard definitions and the matrix are used throughout, in order encourage administrators to analyze the levels at which functioning.

4. The requirement of parent/community involvement objectives in all local school action plans, thus establishing basic local school accountability indicators. All local schools were required to include objectives to increase/enhance parent/community involvement in their local school plans, and these objectives were designed to tie parent involvement efforts more closely to school priorities, thus impacting the types of roles parents were asked to play. As a result, all schools included objectives to increase parent/community involvement, and approximately thirty six percent of elementary schools began parent training workshops which were focused on basic skills

F-69

such as Reading to Your Child, Helping With Homework, Reinforcing Math Skills with Games, etc. Parent support workshops were also used to discuss learning-related issues such as Communicating With Your Child, Understanding the System, and Positive Parenting. Secondary school plans indicated little change in spite of the requirement.

While these systemwide efforts have only been in place for one school year, we are encouraged by the response from local schools. The establishment of the Parental Involvement, Volunteer and Community Services Unit at the central administration level provides for continued coordination and support of these efforts. The unit will continue to monitor impact of these strategies on local school/community relations by collecting and analyzing data on activities undertaken and the numbers and kinds of "new parents" contacted and engaged in either workshops and/or joint learning with their children.

Local schools in the District of Columbia have reported a number of outreach efforts. Those which principals indicate have increased, or altered significantly, minority parent involvement in student progress include:

1. Development of a weekly calendar for parents that provides one skill reinforcement activity that a parent can engage in with a student to enhance or enrich the student's skill-base in reading. As a part of a special project, one elementary school developed first grade weekly parent calendars that were written at easy reading levels and that featured one specific activity per week that a parent could engage in with a child to reinforce learning. Parents were encouraged to practice the activity, and were sent "thank you" notes for working with their children.

2. Implementation of a take-home computer project to encourage parent/child learning at home. As a part of a Chapter One Demonstration Project, three classes in three different schools were selected to participate in a take-home computer project. Parents received orientation and training, and computers were taken home by students for the school year. Home lessons in reading and mathematics drill were practiced by students and their parents. All students participating indicated significant gain over their fellow-students. Parents surveyed indicated a high level of satisfaction from engaging in this process with their children. This Chapter One model program has been cited as an exemplary model and is scheduled for replication in the system.

We are continuing to identify and assess school-initiated strategies that engage parents in learning with their children. In October, the system will showcase a number of parent-student learning opportunities at the Fourth Annual Citywide Parent Conference. This conference is projected to serve at least two thousand parents this year. The school system continues to seek creative opportunities for engaging parents in their children's learning as the importance of this activity to the success of students becomes more and more apparent.

We are mindful that support, training and technical assistance to local school staff is imperative if they are to be able to support and enhance student performance through the purposeful involvement of parents in home learning.

Study Questions

1) The D.C. Public Schools system has in place both Board Rules and an Administrative Directive to support and structure parent and community involvement. What kinds of structures exist or need to exist in your organization?

2) The matrix identifies specific behaviors practiced by parents and school staff. At what level is your school/system functioning?

3) Our studies have indicated that schools must initiate dialogue with parents, create new relationships and foster parent involvement in learning. What new or different skills will principals and teachers need to develop to meet this challenge?

4) The COPE study noted that both school staff and parents had low expectations for parents roles. How do you begin to alter these expectations?

F-71

DEVELOPMENTAL MATRIX

PARENT ACTIONS	SCHOOL/DISTRICT ACTIONS
I. Response Only 1) returning phone calls 2) visiting upon request 3) reading materials sent	**I. Basic Communication** 1) initiating contact for problem resolution 2) disseminating information
II. Expressed Interest 1) asking child what he did in school 2) making at least one un-solicited contact with school 3) initiating at least one contact with local school organizations 4) promptly responding to school notification 5) picking up your child's report card in person	**II. Development of A Welcoming Climate** 1) developing invitations/notices to visit 2) communicating basic rules 3) assisting in parent organization development 4) following up dissemination with phone contact,reminders, etc. 5) developing and implementing a system for visitation and socialization
III. Enhanced Interest 1) regularly attending convened parent meetings (grade level, homeroom, school wide, PTA, etc.) 2) initiating direct positive teacher contact 3) initiating report card conferences 4) spending one day in the school (observation, volunteering, etc.)	**III. Enhancing Climate** 1) initiating positive personal calls 2) disseminating a regular news letter 3) welcoming unsolicited visitation 4) developing and disseminating an updated handbook for parents 5) providing staff training on parent relations 6) adding parents to hospitality planning

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

F-72

PARENT ACTIONS	SCHOOL/DISTRICT ACTIONS
IV. Organized Participation 1) attend relevant meetings become active members in organized parent association 3) volunteer when requested 4) review student's homework 5) work with the school to develop guidelines for a) attendance b) attire c) homework d) extra curricular activities	IV. Organized Outreach 1) encourages and plans opportunities for: a) a school/community evening b) homeroom evenings c) ongoing parent orientation d) parent to parent support 2) provides training that fosters parent participation in decision-making at the local level
V. Structured Input/ Coordination 1) reviewing local school plan 2) participating in the development of recommendations 3) volunteering for committee assignments within the parent organization 4) communicating with other parents 5) recruiting other parents for involvement participating in related decision making groups (i.e., Comer, SBM, SAGE, PTA/HSA)	V. Nurtured Shared Decision Making 1) including parent development in local school plans 2) creating opportunities for parent inclusion in overall planning 3) expanding opportunities for parent training 4) providing ongoing liaison with parent organizations 5) identifying parents with leadership ability to increase opportunities for parent involvement
VI. Expanded Input/Advisory Advocacy 1) attending board meeting(s) 2) volunteering for systemwide activities (ie., Parents Forum, PTA, Congress, etc.)sharing information about your school with other community groups identifying opportunities for collaboration between the schools and the community 5) serving in a leadership role in your school (PTA, Councils, etc.)	VI. Nurtured Representation 1) encouraging local parent participation in city-wide/ systemwide activities 2) sharing public hearing notices 3) identifying training opportunities for parents 4) developing organized incentives and recognition for parent and community organizations and volunteers 5) taking a parent representative to Board of Education meeting 6) creating opportunities for parents to represent your school and preparing them to do so

F-73

Activity Sheet 11 (5 pages)

THE COMER PROCESS IN PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY, MARYLAND
(Home School Communications - A Matter of Trust & Respect)

Jan Stocklinski
Comer Process Supervisor

Virginia Walker
Parent, Prince George's County

BACKGROUND

The School Development Program, better known as the Comer Process was developed by James P. Comer, a child psychiatrist and Associate Dean of the Yale Medical School. Briefly, it is a research based school improvement process that involves skills and energy of the entire school community working together to achieve the goals outlined in a school's Improvement Plan.

Key to the process and successful outcomes for our students is the building of relationships (respecting one another) among all stakeholders in a school community. It is a tough challenge to pull adults together who may be different in background (economically, racially, culturally), in attitudes, and in values, to decide what is important to them about their school - what is already good about their schools, and what they want to happen in their schools.

In 1985, the Prince George's County Public School System (a suburb of Washington, D.C. - approximately 105,000 students with approximately 65% African American students) adopted this Comer Process as one of the resources given to Milliken II Schools, predominantly one race (Black) schools that were part of our desegregation court order. Since that time, the number of schools using the Process has grown to almost 50 (35 elementary, 13 middle, and 2 high schools).

THE PROCESS

The Comer Process (School Development Program) establishes three vehicles - School Planning and Management Team, Parent Teacher Association, and a Mental Health Team which we renamed Student Staff Services Team.

Because this case study focuses on home school communication and home learning, we will focus on the School Planning and Management Team - the group that oversees the development of the School Improvement Plan (activities, etc.). It also acts as a problem-solving group when global issues are brought to the table. The team consists of parents, teachers, principal, counselor, a representative from the support staff (custodian, cafeteria staff or

F-74

secretarial staff) and students at the secondary level. Parents must represent all aspects of the community and must reflect the racial/ethnic and geographic aspects of the school. All members of the team must receive training in team building, problem solving and consensus.

The staff and parnt members must share with their "constituencies" what happens at the meetings and get input back to the group they represent. They must also be trained in reaching out and pulling others (parents/staff) into the process so that many members (staff/parents) feel responsible for the outcomes - both outcomes of school activities, outcomes related to student achievement and outcomes related to the healthy development of all children in a school.

BARRIERS TO PARENT INVOLVEMENT AND HOW TO OVERCOME THEM

School teams must recognize barriers to parent involvement and then work to remove them. One of the greatest barriers is one of "attitudes." We hear teachers make comments like "you know how those parents are" - "you know where they live" - etc. Comer Process starts with a "no fault" approach. We don't blame - rather, we surface problems and solve them.

School staffs need training in:

a. greeting and meeting parents and creating an inviting and non-threatening climate

b. in reaching out and not sitting together as the "school choir" at PTA's

c. in calling parents and using positively phrased language

d. in learning and understanding cultural/racial/ethnic groups different from themselves and even sometimes their own groups

e. in how to use volunteers effectively once they have them

f. in understanding why it is painful for some families to get involved (prior negative experiences - intimidation with our school language)

g. in seeking parent representatives to initially sit on the SPMT. (One way is to have the principal or teacher call individuals and asking them to serve the first year.)

h. in planning activities that do not stress out parents and teachers with too many evening meetings.

WHERE DO WE BEGIN?

We use the School Planning and Management Team as a brainstorming group - as a group that develops and oversees the coordination of the School Improvement Plan and as a group that develops a social/academic calendar that helps bring organization to the school community.

Here are some concrete examples of what happened at some schools in Prince George's County. At one elementary, one of the first concerns was establishing an inviting climate. It was decided that everyone would work first with the students to establish a sense of pride in their school and each time a parent meeting or workshop was held, every teacher spent time with their students mentally involving them and encouraging them to bring their parents. A motto soon developed "Parents - bring your kids" - "Kids - bring your parents."

HOME LEARNING IDEAS - Workshops were developed based on the academic and social needs developed in the school development plan.

1. Reading Workshop for Parents

Ideas were given to parents by example and in booklet form to improve reading skills at home. The child reads recipe or package directions while parent is cooking in the evening.

2. Math Workshop for Students

Math teacher gives overview of skills by grade level and gives ideas on activities using household items, and games to play. Example: measure your sister, how many cups of water can you get in this bowl.

3. Science Fair Workshop

What is involved in the scientific method. Handouts given of resources available to parents and how parents can support their children at home as the child develops and plans their Science Fair Project.

4. Test-Taking Skills Workshop

Explanation of the test is given and tips for relaxing so you don't freeze up. Examples of the answer sheets and what kind of questions to expect.

F-76

5. How to Get Out of the House in the Morning - Building Self Reliance

This was a parent workshop to give tips for parents who may or may not work. Put keys and book bags by the front door, set table for breakfast, pick out clothes, etc. All this is done the night before with the child.

6. Understanding Child Growth and Development

How parents can best work with their children at home at different ages and stages.

7. Unplug the T.V. - A School-Wide Approach

A contract is drawn up. The T.V. is unplugged for a week, month, etc. Other activities are planned and summary is discussed afterwards at a PTA meeting, or at a spaghetti dinner, etc.

8. Multicultural Education and Your Child

Creating a bias-free environment at home.

9. Adolescence Workshop

This workshop deals with body changes, stress that may be experienced by the adolescent and ways to deal with it.

10. Learning Styles Workshop

This workshop helps parents know more about the best way their particular child learns and how they can reinforce this at home. Either the PTA, SPMT or sub-committee worked to determine whether the workshop would be a general one or one developed for specific grade levels. Publicity went home by way of announcements; letters written by students to their parents; telephne calls; students so excited about the activity that they "brought" their parents out; and incentive programs with some healthy classroom competition. Often parents and staff present workshops together and this also made parents feel more comfortable attending.

A COUNTY PERSPECTIVE

We also established a county-wide Steering Committee of "grass roots" people - a staff member and parent from each of forty-six schools meet four times a year to share successes, problem solve and plan an annual Retreat. The Retreat offers skills training and sharing opportunities to the School Planning and Management Teams (School-Based Management Teams) once a year.

F-77

At the county level, several forms and documents were developed for parents by our Guidance Department*.

1. Elementary Home/School File for Educational/ Personal Documents. This folder gives parents a focus for school involvement in a particular grade level as well as gives ideas of learning activities parents can do regularly at home to support the school program.
2. It's Your Right! It's Your Responsibility! (Used with all families.)
3. Parents' Guide to College Admissions Testing

*Prince George's County Public Schools
Sasscer Administration Building
14201 School Lane
Upper Marlboro, Maryland 20772
Mrs. Patricia Martin, Guidance Supervisor

F-78

SAN DIEGO CITY SCHOOLS
Community Relations and Integration Services Division
Parent Involvement Integrated Service Area

Report on Efforts to Build Home-School Partnerships and Announcement of Parent Involvement Incentive Grant Awards for 1991-92

June 4, 1991

Issue/Concern

The Parent Involvement Task Force, a broad-based group of parents, community representatives and district staff (Attachment B), has developed a comprehensive policy for parent involvement (Attachment A).

The Task Force requests that district staff periodically update the school board regarding district efforts to encourage home-school partnerships.

Background

All parent involvement programs at school and district level are to follow a general framework that includes a vision statement and three supportive components:

1. Building staff capacity to work effectively with parents;
2. Partnership development to plan and implement comprehensive parent involvement programs at schools; and
3. Follow-up and support to sustain ongoing parent involvement.

Responsibility for the implementation of this policy has been assigned to the district's Parent Involvement Department.

Discussion

The Parent Involvement Department was established to provide coordination for district level efforts in parent involvement and to provide technical assistance to schools as they develop site parent involvement programs.

Update of District Efforts to Support the Parent Involvement Policy

The Parent Involvement Department has provided substantial assistance to schools to support the three components that serve as a framework for implementing the parent involvement policy.

I. Building Staff Capacity to work effectively with parents.

Joyce Epstein's research on teachers' practices to promote parent involvement indicates that when teachers take deliberate actions to involve parents (i.e., giving parents clear, useful information about how to help their children at home), then socioeconomic status and education level of parents disappear as factors in the willingness of parents to be involved. However, when teachers don't actively work to involve parents, those factors become important indicators for who becomes and stays involved; typically, that means mainstream parents with higher levels of education and social class. It is important for parents of all students to provide support for their children's education.

A number of training opportunities and resources were available for staff to build their competence and confidence to work effectively with all parents.

- Parent Involvement Department staff provided:
  - technical assistance (materials, planning/evaluation assistance or other resources) to 83 schools; and
  - training sessions for 13 schools on parent involvement program planning, home-school communication, parent-teacher conferencing or planning and conducting home visits to parents.

- *The Vital Connection*, a quarterly newsletter designed to build staff awareness about the importance of parent involvement and give practical ideas to build home-school partnerships, was distributed to schools.

- *The Parent Involvement Handbook for Principals and Staff*, developed in 1990, was reprinted and presented to all new administrators (65 copies have been sold to other school districts nationally and the handbook is now listed in ERIC).

- The Parent Involvement Department staff did training sessions for new principals, for vice principal leadership candidates through the Leadership Development Program and new bilingual teachers.

- *Parents On Your Side* workshops were made available for teachers, counselors and principals. The workshop is designed to enable staff to improve communication with parents and enlist their support for homework completion and improved student behavior. Workshops were presented at seven elementary and seven secondary schools for 685 staff members.

F-10

II. Partnership Development to plan and implement comprehensive parent involvement programs at schools.

The most successful parent involvement efforts at schools are comprehensive (responding to a variety of needs), systematically planned and long-lasting. Some of the efforts to assist the development of home-school partnerships are listed below.

- In October, 1990 the third annual county wide parent involvement conference *Home-School-Community: Team Building For Student Success* was held at Crawford High School. Attendance has increased from 300 parents and staff attending in 1988 to 700 in 1989 to 1000 in 1990. Workshop sessions were presented in English, Spanish, Lao, Cambodian and Vietnamese.
- The Parent Involvement Department staff provided assistance to organizers of the African Family Conference (December, 1990) and the Latino Family Conference (April, 1991).
- Parents and staff were provided with opportunities for training to implement two site-based programs, *Family Reading* (12 trainings) to support the district's new language arts program and *Parents Growing Together* (15 trainings) to help parents understand child development and improve parenting skills.
- The Institute for Responsive Education in Boston has selected six schools (Horton, Sherman, Torrey Pines, Valencia Park, Pacific Beach Middle School and Memorial Academy) to be part of its national Schools reaching Out project.
- Twenty-three schools were awarded Parent Involvement Incentive Grants for 1990-91 to work with community based organizations or to develop innovative projects to strengthen home-school partnerships.
- Implementation of a new pilot project designed to build on successful parent education and outreach strategies used by Vahac Mardirosian's Parent Institute for Quality Education is now underway at Emerson School.
- Culturally sensitive home learning materials developed for pre-K through first grades have been piloted in English and Spanish. The materials are currently being translated into four Southeast Asian languages. Materials are now being developed for second and third grades. Activities involve parents and children in doing problem solving, math and reading together.

III. Follow-up and Support to facilitate the participation and support of parents.

In order to assist schools to establish and sustain parent involvement, commitments must be made at site and district levels to provide necessary resources, guidance and accountability for efforts. In the past year this component has been supported through efforts such as:

- The Parent Involvement Task Force has continued to meet regularly and play a very active role as an advisory group for policy implementation issues.
- An ongoing effort is being made to link school site and district parent involvement activities to community resources. While maintaining mutual respect for autonomy, efforts are being made by parent involvement staff to build working relationships with community groups as well as with PTA leadership, individual parent activists and the superintendent's ethnic advisory committees.
- A special effort is also being made to link district parent involvement efforts to resources and information available at state and national levels.
- Parent Involvement has been established as a component of the overall school site plan for each school.
- Several important changes will soon have a positive impact on the Follow-up and Support component as a direct result of central office restructuring:
    - First, the new Parent Involvement and Support Department will assume responsibility for School Improvement Programs and Chapter 1 parent involvement components.
    - Second, a bus formerly owned by the Mentor Teacher Program has been purchased and will be staffed for use as a mobile Parent Resource Center for schools.
    - Third, developing standards for parent involvement and mutual accountability for schools and for the new CRISD Integrated Service Areas and School Support Teams.

Parent Involvement Incentive Grant Awards

The purpose of the grants is to support the parent involvement policy by encouraging schools to develop promising practices and innovative programs that strengthen partnerships between home and school.

Schools that received Parent Involvement Incentive Grants for the current school year (Attachment C) are scheduled to receive certificates of recognition at the June 4 Board of Education meeting.

Schools selected to receive 1991-92 Parent Involvement Incentive Grants are listed in Attachment C.

Summary

San Diego City Schools has a commitment to approach the complex issue of parent involvement in a comprehensive and systematic way. The district's parent involvement policy can be implemented through thoughtful planning and collaborative action to provide necessary resources for schools, evaluation of efforts and mutual accountability for results. By establishing a solid foundation and cohesive approach for parent involvement efforts, it will be possible to:

- assist staff to work effectively with parents to help them to support their children's learning; and
- strengthen programs at schools that can significantly enhance outcomes for students.

Parent Involvement Grant Awards 1991-92

Parent Involvement Incentive Grants have been awarded to district schools for the 1991-92 school year. The grants were selected by the Parent Involvement Task Force. The grants ranged from $2,000 to $10,000. Schools applied for innovative grants to implement programs that go beyond traditional parent involvement activities. CONGRATULATIONS to the following schools:

Elementary:

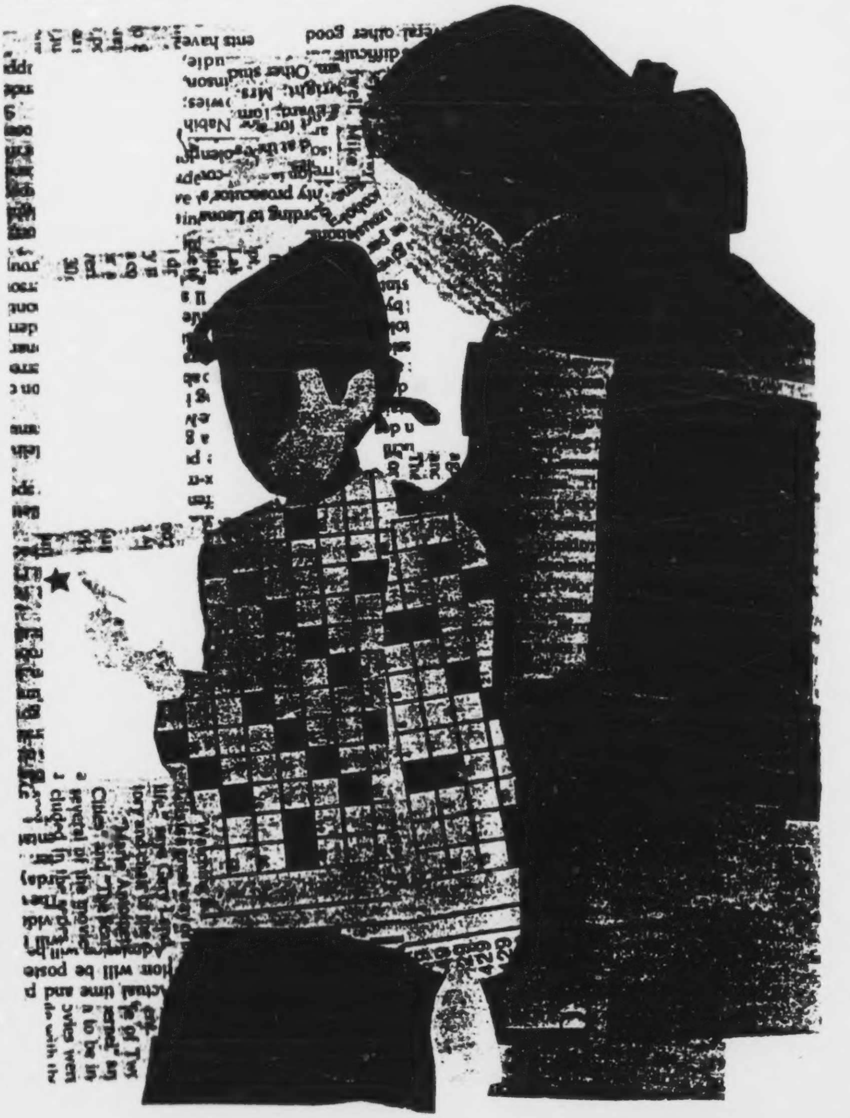
School	**Program Focus**	**Award**
Adams	Develop and offer early orientation (and registration) for incoming kindergarten students. Provide bridging classes for students and parents in order to ensure a smooth beginning of school and train a large cadre of parents with skills to help their children become successful in school.	$6,000
Euclid	Develop a Family Literacy Program in several languages, provide a Self-Esteem Program for parents and students, utilize cultural diversity of families to support student learning, establish a Parent Book Corner and collect home learning materials in different languages for parent check-out.	$6,000
Field	Offer a homework clinic known as the Field Bureau of Information (FBI) manned by parents and community members and establish a voice mail hotline to inform those parents who cannot actively participate in school activities of homework assignments, messages from the principals and teachers and helpful hints from the support staff.	$10,000
Hickman	Develop site-based research teams to discover ways of motivating parents to actively participate in their children's education. Establish a parent communication and environmental awareness center.	$5,000
Perry*	Develop a room-parent network to coordinate parent involvement activities, continuation of a tutoring program and provide staff-developed learning materials (k-6) for parents to use at home with their children.	$7,000
Valencia Park	Develop strategies to recruit and motivate parents to actively participate in their children's education through specific parent skill building such as ESL, parenting skills, and Family Math, Family Reading, and field trips to enhance cultural/community awareness.	$4,000
Spreckels	Offer the Family Reading Program, a series of workshops in which parents are instructed in ways to read and discuss children's literature and implement the Family Kindergarten Program, a series of trainings to encourage parents to help their children in reading readiness, math, homework and study skills.	$2,000
Whitman	Initiate a Parent/Community Member Shadow Day, offer staff and parent leadership training, purchase computers for a home lending program, and provide staff developed resource guides for strengthening home-school partnerships.	$5,000

T.F3

Parents in Touch

District Leadership for Parent Involvement

Ms. Warner describes some strategies used in Indianapolis to facilitate the kind of two-way communication that enables parents to stay in touch and to become partners with the schools in the education of their children.



BY IZONA WARNER

PARENT INVOLVEMENT is not a new idea in the Indianapolis Public Schools (IPS). In 1978 the district submitted a proposal to the Lilly Endowment, requesting a three-year grant to enhance the level of parent involvement in students' education. That proposal grew out of a growing awareness of successful practices around the country, a review of the literature, and a formal needs assessment within the school district that had brought to light parents' wish that the schools would keep them better informed.[1] We proposed developing a multifaceted, systemwide parent involvement program.

The result was the establishment of Parents in Touch, which continues to this day as the umbrella program for parent involvement in the IPS. Its name clearly states its goal: to facilitate the kind of two-way communication that enables parents to stay in touch and to become partners with the schools in the education of their children.

IZONA WARNER is the director of Parents in Touch, Indianapolis.

Reprinted with permission.

Illustration by Kris Hackleman

F-85

Why should parents enter into such partnerships with schools? As the first teachers of their children, parents have the primary responsibility for children's learning. Children's ideas and attitudes about the importance of education and learning begin with the expectations and beliefs of their parents. Therefore, parents have a crucial role in both the function and the reform of schooling. Teachers and administrators have an obligation to help parents carry out their natural roles as models for and helpers of their own children. Working together, schools and families can improve student achievement, attendance, and behavior.

In order to reach and involve all parents, Parents in Touch uses a variety of approaches. Several of the district's strategies are described below.

PARENT/TEACHER CONFERENCES

Parent/teacher conferences are a major emphasis of the Parents in Touch program. Conferences for grades K-12 are held at the end of the first six-week grading period. Adjusted hours are arranged through agreement between the administration and the Indianapolis Education Association so that working parents can be accommodated. In each school, a coordinator is designated to schedule conferences. The goal is to meet with all students' families early in the school year to establish communication.

At the conferences, report cards are distributed, and parents and teachers share information about students. They assess progress and may set goals for increasing students' achievement. The conferences are also an opportunity for teachers to distribute materials developed by Parents in Touch to help parents understand and support their children and the schools.

At the elementary level (K-6), the Parents in Touch materials include activity calendars, student/teacher/parent (STP) contracts, and STP folders.

- Activity calendars are prepared for parents of students in kindergarten through grade 3. The calendars include curriculum-related suggestions for daily activities with children. They also provide information about holiday schedules, test dates, report card schedules, and a variety of community and school resources. Spelling assignments for the entire school year are included, so that youngsters and families can practice them. If parents cannot attend the conferences, their children are given the calendars to take home. At the elementary level, about 83% of the students' families attended conferences during the 1988-89 school year.

PARENTS IN TOUCH VIEWS CONFERENCES AT ALL LEVELS OF SCHOOLING AS VEHICLES FOR TWO-WAY COMMUNICATION ON MATTERS RELATED TO STUDENT SUCCESS.

- STP contracts are offered to parents by schools that choose to use them. These contracts – prepared in triplicate and signed by parents, teachers, and students – are agreements to fulfill certain commitments. By signing, the parent agrees, among other things, to see that the child attends school regularly, to establish a regular time for homework, and to provide a place for study. The student agrees to come to school prepared to learn, to complete and return homework on time, and to observe regular study hours. The teacher agrees to advise parents of their child's progress and to provide activities that make learning meaningful and enjoyable. Although principals are not parties to the contracts, they commit themselves to endorsing parent involvement and to ensuring that the building climate encourages learning. Twenty thousand contracts were distributed by schools that participated in this program during the 1989-90 school year.
- STP folders go home weekly and then are returned to school. The folders contain students' completed assignments and information that will help parents monitor homework. They also provide a place for parents and teachers to write notes to one another.

The materials provided by Parents in Touch to foster parent involvement at the junior high school level (grades 7-8) include folders, STP contracts, and a weekly calendar.

- Folders containing school policies on homework and attendance, on grading procedures, and on dates for distributing report cards are given to all parents at the first parent/teacher conference or are sent home with students whose parents cannot attend. Overviews of the magnet school programs available at the high school level are also included for parents' consideration.
- STP contracts are prepared in triplicate and discussed with middle-grade parents during the conferences. These contracts are similar to the elementary STP contracts but are tailored to the needs of middle-schoolers; for example, they include information to help parents improve their interactions with early adolescents.
- All junior high schools provide weekly calendars on which students can list their daily assignments in each class. The calendars enable parents to monitor their children's homework.

At the high school level, the materials provided by Parents in Touch include a folder and a course record.

- Folders, distributed at the first parent/teacher conference, give parents general information about graduation requirements, courses, class rankings and standings, the attendance policy, and the faculty advisory program.
- A course record for each student is enclosed in his or her folder. This record lists all courses taken and the grades the student received. Parents can assess a child's status by comparing the course record with the requirements for graduation.

In addition to providing these materials, some high schools hold meetings to give parents information that deals with college financial aid programs.

In short, Parents in Touch views conferences at all levels of schooling as vehicles for two-way communication on

F-86

matters that are important for student success. The conferences are designed to allow parents and teachers to begin a productive relationship that will grow throughout the school year.

DIAL-A-TEACHER

The Dial-a-Teacher program is designed to give students and parents assistance with and information about homework. Located in a library/media center, Dial-a-Teacher operates Monday through Thursday (except on holidays) between the hours of 5 p.m. and 8 p.m.

Dial-a-Teacher is staffed by two teams of teacher specialists, paid by funds from Chapter 2. Each five-member team is composed of specialists in math, social studies, science, language arts, and elementary education.

The teacher specialists act as an extension of the classroom, helping students who need extra assistance and who might not complete their homework without it. They also answer questions from parents about their children's homework. The teachers lead students to the right answers, rather than merely give them the solutions.

HOMEWORK HOTLINE

"Homework Hotline" is a live call-in television program, produced by the IPS Center for Instructional Television and aired every Tuesday from 5 to 6 p.m. Two paid teacher specialists assist callers with mathematics problems for grades 1-6. Students and parents can talk with the television teachers and simultaneously see the problems worked on the chalkboard. American Cablevision, with approximately 67,000 subscribers, and Comcast Cablevision, with approximately 81,000 subscribers, carry the program on their public television channels.

PARENT LINE/COMMUNICATOR

The Parent Line/Communicator is a computerized telephone system that gives callers access to about 140 three- to four-minute tape-recorded messages on a variety of school-related topics. Each tape also refers callers to sources of additional information. Sample topics include school policies, option programs, magnet schools, parenting skills, adult education programs, and home/school cooperation. Reflecting its sponsorship by the Institute for Drug and Alcohol Abuse, the series also offers more than 50 messages on those topics. The line is in operation 24 hours a day for persons with touch-tone phones; those with rotary phones can use the system during office hours, when a clerk can transfer their calls to the requested tape title or code number. As many as 3,000 calls have been logged in a single month.

PARENT EDUCATION SEMINARS ARE OFFERED AT WORK SITES IN THE INDIANAPOLIS COMMUNITY TO SERVE PARENTS WHO CANNOT COME TO THE SCHOOLS.

THE PARENT FOCUS SERIES

The Parent Focus Series is a parent education program offering 90 special workshops that schools may request from Parents in Touch. Some workshops run as a series of five or six 90-minute sessions. Others meet only once. The workshops include discussions, lectures, and videos on such topics as early adolescent development, building children's self-esteem, teaching responsibility, and helping with homework.

Workshops are offered during both daytime and evening hours, and child care is sometimes provided. The workshops are not formal support groups, but some sessions end up serving that function. Interaction among participants is encouraged.

As part of the Parent Focus outreach effort, Parents in Touch invites public servants and people affiliated with community agencies to share their expertise with parents attending the workshops. Presenters have come from the Family Services Association, the Salvation Army, the prosecutor's office, the juvenile court, Alcoholics Anonymous, and other organizations and agencies.

WORK-SITE SEMINARS

Parent education seminars are offered at work sites in the Indianapolis community to serve parents who cannot come to workshops that are held in the school buildings. The seminars, held during lunch hours, help parents who are employed to balance work and family responsibilities. Partnerships that link home, school, and work site can make a difference in the academic success of many students, can reduce parents' anxiety about child-rearing problems, can promote a supportive atmosphere among employees, and can increase organizational loyalty. Employees bring a brown-bag lunch, or the employers provide lunch. These monthly seminars are co-sponsored by the Education Council of the Indianapolis Chamber of Commerce and by local businesses. The seminar topics, taken from those covered in the Parent Focus Series, are chosen after the employees have been surveyed about their interests and needs.

TIPS

One method for teachers to increase parents' involvement in their children's learning and development is a process called Teachers Involve Parents in Schoolwork (TIPS), developed by Joyce Epstein at Johns Hopkins University. The TIPS process structures homework assignments so that they include communications from school to home and from home to school and so that parents and children talk together at home about schoolwork. Parents in Touch obtained a grant from the state department of education to fund a summer program in which IPS teachers developed math and science homework assignments for grades 2, 3, 4, and 5. The short, easy-to-distribute activities are coordinated with the curriculum of each

FP7

subject to focus on specific skills at each grade level. TIPS builds students' skills, informs parents about schoolwork, expands the amount of supervised learning time, and increases parents' appreciation of teachers and their support for the schools.

SUPERINTENDENT'S PARENT ADVISORY COUNCIL

The staffs of Parents in Touch and of the IPS Office of School and Community Relations provide administrative support for the superintendent's advisory council, which includes parent representatives. The council has developed a mission statement regarding the family/school partnership and is designing a structure that will support the statement. A proposal to put the council's ideas into practice will be presented to the board of school commissioners and should become part of district policy.

MEETING CHAPTER 1 MANDATES

The Parents in Touch staff is responsible for helping the district meet Chapter 1 mandates for parent involvement. Several strategies are used.

- The staff plans and conducts curriculum-related workshops to give parents suggestions for activities that they can use to reinforce their children's reading and math skills.
- The staff works with the district-wide Chapter 1 Parent Advisory Council (PAC) and helps it implement activities.
- The staff organizes, conducts, or facilitates parent education workshops, volunteer activities, and leadership training.
- Conferences between parents and Chapter 1 staff members are coordinated to coincide with the first parent/teacher conferences of the school year at each building.
- The Be Excited About Reading (BEAR) project began in the fall of 1990. Parents of children in grades K-6 are asked to promote and encourage reading for pleasure. Read-along tape recordings are provided for parents who do not read well themselves. Parents and students who read two or more books per month receive an award.
- Parents are given "deposit slips" for investing in their children's future by participating in such Chapter 1 activities as workshops, training sessions, and PAC meetings. Each event attended earns one slip, and, if four slips are accumulated within one semester, they are redeemable for a premium.

A COMPREHENSIVE PROGRAM OF PARENT INVOLVEMENT

According to Epstein, a successful effort to involve parents in their children's education requires five basic ingredients.[2] Comprehensive programs of parent involvement should include all five elements, and the Indianapolis program operationalizes Epstein's model by means of the the strategies described above.

Developing parenting skills is the goal of the first component of Epstein's model. Parents are first and foremost supporters of their children; they provide food, clothing, shelter, and psychological support for their children as they grow up. Parents in Touch helps parents fulfill their parenting roles by providing information and ideas about the characteristics of and suggesting strategies for the development of a home environment that supports the learning behaviors of children at each grade level.

The second component of Epstein's model and of the IPS parent involvement effort is communication. The staff works hard to design effective forms of communication that will reach all parents.

The third component of the parent involvement model is the use of parent volunteers. IPS encourages parents to work as volunteers at the school or to attend and support events and meetings.

The fourth component of Epstein's model is encouraging children's learning activities at home. Parents in Touch provides ideas, materials, and training to parents through its own programs and through TIPS homework activities.

The final component of the parent involvement model is encouraging parental participation in decision making across the district. The Parents in Touch staff supports this effort by recruiting parents and by helping to develop parent leadership.

IPS believes it can better meet the academic and developmental needs of its students if substantive collaboration between parents, teachers, and administrators is increased. Parent involvement is viewed as an important component of the district's school improvement plan. If all children can learn, then all parents can help to make that happen.

"At least they're educated guesses. I ought to get some credit for that!"

---

1. The needs assessment was conducted by Ned S. Hubbell and Associates in 1975.

2. Joyce L. Epstein, "What Principals Should Know About Parent Involvement," *Principal*, vol. 66, 1987, pp. 6-9; and Ron Brandt, "On Improving School and Family Connections: A Conversation with Joyce Epstein," *Educational Leadership*, October 1989, pp. 24-27.

Activity Sheet 14

Case Study Questions

1. How was strategy implemented?

2. What appear to be the potential benefits and costs of the strategy?

3. What evidence of effect or positive impact is provided?

4. To what extent does the strategy seem to be transportable?

Activity Sheet 15

CHECKLIST OF YOUR DISTRICT'S POLICIES ON PARENT INVOLVEMENT

Does your district have a written policy on:	**YES**	**NO**	**?**
1. Parent involvement in volunteer activities	___	___	___
2. Parent involvement in home learning	___	___	___
3. Parent involvement in homework	___	___	___
4. Parent involvement in fund-raising	___	___	___
5. Parent-teacher conferences	___	___	___
6. Student progress reports to parents	___	___	___
7. Parent-school communications	___	___	___
8. Parent involvement in decision making	___	___	___

F90

Annotated Summaries from Research and Practice Literature

Becher, R. (1984). ***Parent involvement: A review of research and principles of successful practice.*** **Washington, DC: National Institute of Education.**

This is an extensive review of the literature on parent involvement in education, particularly at the early childhood level. The author considers four major areas: the role of parents and families in determining children's intelligence, competence, and achievement; the effects of parent education programs of student achievement and the characteristics of effective programs; the benefits of parent involvement for schools and educators; and the principles of effective programs for parent involvement.

Cale, L. (1990). ***Planning for parent involvement: A handbook for administrators, teachers, and parents.*** **Phoenix, AZ: author.**

This is an excellent collection of ideas and materials that school administrators, teachers, and parents can use when planning for parent involvement. Some of the major topics covered include: benefits of parent involvement; how do parents want to be involved; the changing American family; changing American demographics; identifying obstacles, finding opportunities; principles of effective family-school partnership; suggestions for successful parental involvement in education; types of parent involvement; and steps to developing a parent involvement program. Also included are questionnaires, checklists, ideas, recent legislation, resources, and references.

Chavkin, N. F. & Williams, D. L., Jr. (1987). Enhancing parent involvement: Guidelines for access to an important resource for school administrators. ***Education and Urban Society, 19,*** **164-184.**

This articles reports on a survey of parents and school administrators regarding their attitudes, current practices, and policies on parent involvement in the education of elementary-age children. More than 2500 superintendents, 2400 school board presidents, and 4200 parents in the southwestern region of the U.S. participated in the survey.

The findings reveal that parents and administrators strongly agree that teachers should provide parents with ideas about helping children with school work at home, that principals should provide teachers with suggestions for working with parents, that teachers consider working with parents as part of the job. Parents and administrators believed that school districts should provide: (1) guidelines to help teachers and principals involve parents in the schools; (2) training for teachers on how to work with parents; and (3) training for parents on how to be involved in their child's learning. Administrators say the three most important roles for parents are audience, home tutor, and school program supporter.

In spite of parents' and educators' desire for more school policies about parent involvement, few districts reported any written policies. The most common type of written policy was on the rights of parents to participate in placement decisions regarding their own children.

Based on the results of the survey, the authors suggest that school district policies encouraging parent involvement need to be formalized. The existence of formal, written polices was directly related to increased parent involvement. In addition, school districts need to provide staff, space, and monetary resources for the implementation of effective parent involvement efforts. The provision of resources helps emphasize the importance of parent involvement in education and demonstrates a commitment to its success.

Chrispeels, J. (1991). District leadership in parent involvement: Policies and actions in San Diego. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 72, 367-371.

New state and district policy initiatives in California recognize that parent involvement is multifaceted and takes active support. Both California and local districts have adopted policies that provide a clear definition of parent involvement in education. The coordination of state, district, and individual school efforts is leading the way to improved educational achievement for all students.

Recognizing the limits of policies that are not coupled with support, school districts in California are working through the problems of implementing and maintaining policies. The new policy initiatives, however, do offer hope and are a major step forward for parent involvement in education.

Chrispeels, J. (1988). *Home-school partnership planner*. San Diego, CA: San Diego County Office of Education.

This planner is designed for principals, teachers, and parents who wish to strengthen their school's home-school partnership. The planner begins with a brief overview of the terminology used in partnership planning and then provides step-by-step instructions for developing a home-school partnership plan. The planner includes: a communications checklist; an archival data form; a blank home-school partnership planning calendar; and a sample completed home-school partnership planning calendar.
The planner also includes assessment questions, a vision statement, and an action plan.

Clark, R. M. (1989). The role of parents in ensuring education success in school restructuring efforts. Washington, DC: Council of Chief State School Officers.

Reginald Clark offers suggestions on the role of parents in ensuring education success by first examining how successful and non-successful students spend their time. He reports that over 180 school days successful students spend more than 630 hours in literacy activities while non-achieving students only spend about 270 hours.

Clark discusses the home and community curriculum that is necessary for school success. He examines the role of state education agencies in encouraging and supporting districts in four key areas: planning and implementing effective education programs; soliciting and maintaining parent involvement and community support; helping parents acquire parenting ideas and leadership strategies for helping their children achieve literacy skills; helping districts to directly help students become effectively connected to community-based programs. Clark includes the California policy and specific steps for helping schools develop a written school plan for comprehensive parent involvement activities.

Comer, J. (1988). Educating poor minority children. ***Scientific American, 259,*** **42-48.**

In this article James Comer reviews the work of the Yale Child Study Center with the New Haven school system from 1968 through 1980. Comer stresses the importance of the underlying developmental and social issues and the necessity of involving parents and the community in children's education. The success that was achieved in New Haven is being replicated in the Prince Georges County, Maryland and the Benton Harbor, Michigan schools. Comer's work clearly proves that parent involvement can be successful in all schools, even those with a predominantly low-income population.

Council of Chief State School Officers. (1991). ***Families in school: State strategies and policies to improve family involvement in education.*** **Washington, DC: author.**

This document presents both the research and practice perspective from the literature and the experience perspective of four states who have used diverse approaches and strategies for implementing family involvement in education policies and practices. The four states studied are Alabama, California, Florida, and Minnesota.

The report begins by discussing the lack of leadership at the state level for support of family involvement in education activities. The purpose of this report is to understand more about the policy goals of family involvement in the selected states, what the strategies in each state are, and whether a coordinated state vision of family involvement is developing.

Each of the four case studies presents useful background information on the development and current status of the family involvement initiative. Each case study contains descriptions of successful family involvement activities. The Appendix contains literature references and information on state contacts.

Davies, D. (1987). Parent involvement in the public schools: Opportunities for administrators. ***Education and Urban Society, 19,*** **147-163.**

Davies makes a convincing argument about the essential role of policy in parent involvement in education. He begins by discussing four topics: coproduction or partnership; decision making; citizen advocacy; and parent choice. He follows with specific recommendations for action for parents, policymakers, and practitioners.

His discussion of whether there should be policy mandates or not about parent involvement is of particular importance to Workshop #4. Based on his research at the Institute for Responsive Education, he reports that policies work best when they are specific and prescriptive, when there is periodic evaluation of the policy, and when the policy is supported through money, technical assistance, and staff time.

Davies, D. (1991). Schools reaching out: Family, school, and community partnerships for student success. *Phi Delta Kappan,* 72, 376-382.

The author describes a national project Schools Reaching Out and the three common themes in all the schools--providing success for all children, serving the whole child, and sharing responsibility. The schools are putting together new definitions of parent involvement that go beyond parent involvement to involving family and community agencies in education. Together the schools are searching for practices that work.

Davies describes three ideas that were successful in the demonstration schools: (1) the parent center; (2) home visitors; and (3) action research teams of teachers. The parent center (staffed by paid coordinators and volunteers) offered ESL and GED classes, organized grade-level breakfasts with teachers and parents, served as an escort and referral service to social, and health agencies, maintained a clothing exchange, school store, organized a small toy/book library, and recruited parent volunteers for teachers. The home visitors were four women residents of the community who had experience in community work. The visitors provided information to families about school expectations, the curriculum, rules, and materials. They encouraged families to participate in the Raise a Reader program. The action research teams involved teachers directly in studying home/school/community relations and in devising actions to improve their own practices. These teachers participated in training, did background reading, and conducted interviews with their fellow faculty members about parent involvement attitudes and practices in their own school. The teachers met monthly to discuss their findings and to design several projects aimed at increasing collaboration between the school and its families.

Epstein, J. L. (1991). Paths to partnership: What we can learn from federal, state, district, and school initiatives. *Phi Delta Kappan,* 72, 344-349.

This article provides an overview of successful initiatives for connecting schools, families, and communities. On the national level, Chapter 1 programs, FIRST (Fund for the Improvement and Reform of Schools and Teaching) programs, Head Start, and the new Center on Families, Communities, Schools, and Children's Learning are discussed. State initiatives in California, Illinois, Tennessee, Minnesota, Missouri, and Washington are described. District initiatives in Indianapolis, San Diego, Hamilton County, Ohio, Boston, New York, and Baltimore further illustrate promising practices for involving parents in their children's learning.

Key themes across all of these initiatives are: parents and schools share common goals; programs must continue beyond early childhood; programs must include all families; programs make teachers' jobs easier; program development is not quick and easy; grants encourage participation; family/school coordinators are crucial; programs need rooms for parents; programs must reach out to parents without requiring parents to come to school; technology (radio, television, audio- and videotapes, computers) can help improve parent involvement; programs need to be evaluated. The possibilities discussed in this article offer concrete suggestions and may be adopted or revised by other educators.

Heath, S. B. & McLaughlin, M. W. (1987). A child resource policy: Moving beyond dependence on school and family. *Phi Delta Kappan, 68*: 576-580.

The authors suggest that today's emphasis on the school and school policy as the mechanism for improving education is outdated. They suggest that we need to look at a national child resource policy. They call for a broader view of both the strategies and the institutions that should be working to improve the academic and emotional success of children. They state that the problems of today's children need more than a single policy solution, and they demand resources beyond the school and the family.

Henderson, A. (1987). *The evidence continues to grow: Parent involvement improves student achievement.* Columbia, MD: National Committee for Citizens in Education.

This annotated bibliography gathers research from 49 studies to make the case that parent involvement improves student achievement. The studies treat three broad approaches: parent-child approach; school-program approach; and community approach. The overview at the beginning of the document is an excellent summary of where we are and where we need to be in the research about parent involvement in education.

Henderson, A., Marburger, C., and Ooms, T. (1986). *Beyond the bake sale: An educator's guide to working with parents.* Columbia, MD: National Committee for Citizens in Education.

This excellent guide is a useful resource for educators. Based on research and practice, the guide provides the best of both worlds to the educator. Beginning with the five types of parent involvement, the guide provides exercises for educators to complete about their own school. The book contains opportunities to examine attitudes and to do self-assessments on your own school. The book concludes with recommendations, selected references, and selected resources.

McLaughlin, M. W. & Shields, P. M. (1987). Involving low-income parents in the schools: A role for policy. *Phi Delta Kappan, 69*: 156-160.

This article considers three broad questions: Does parent involvement work? Should it be a policy priority? And is it a feasible target for policy?

Although many districts have not carried out parent involvement in the way it was intended, those districts that have successfully engaged low-income parents have seen positive results for both programs and students. The authors recommend that teachers and administrators should take the lead in parent involvement; that parent-involvement activities should be scheduled for the convenience of parents; and that programs should be responsive to local political realties.

The authors argue for parent involvement policy because they believe low-income parents want to be involved in their children's education. They also cite demographic data (poverty, single parent families, latchkey children, non-English speaking) as a second reason for policy. A significant portion of today's school children come from types of family situations that cause concern and problems for learning.

The authors recognize that policy alone will not ensure parent involvement. They suggest a policy approach that combines both pressure and support. In addition to normative pressures from official policies, support in the form of materials, training, networks, mini-grants, and the like is required.

Moles, O. C. (1987). Who wants parent involvement? Interest, skills, and opportunities among parents and educators. *Education and Urban Society, 19*: 137-145.

The author reports on the strong interest of parents and educators in building more support for home-school collaboration. He cites studies and polls from the National Education Association, the Gallup Poll, the Parents and Teachers Association, and recent research. Despite this strong interest, the skills of parents and teachers are not well-developed. The author calls for more parent involvement efforts and more evaluation of promising programs and strategies.

Nardine, F. E. & Morris, R. D. (1991). Parent involvement in the states: How firm is the commitment? *Phi Delta Kappan*, 72, 363-366.

The authors discuss existing state legislation about parent involvement in education. Only in a few cases is the state legislation backed by adequate staff and funding. This article underscores the need for support for policy about parent involvement in education. The authors report on two studies they conducted on the states' investment in parent involvement in education and the status of parent involvement legislation and guidelines. The authors recommend that the states need to give parent involvement a much higher priority than currently exists.

National School Board Association. (1988). *First teachers: Parent involvement in the public schools*. Alexandria, VA: author.

This book is an excellent overview of parent involvement in educators. Specifically written for educators, the book considers the benefits of parent involvement, why parents aren't involved, models for parent involvement, successful parent involvement programs, and implications for school board policy.

The Appendix contains much useful information that is clearly written and easily accessible. Appendix A is a list of resources including books, reports, articles, and research studies. Appendix B is a sample policy checklist that trainers or participants might want to apply to

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

F96

the school districts with which they are working. Appendix C contains actual school district policies.

Oakes, J. & Lipton, M. (1990). ***Making the best of schools: A handbook for parents, teachers, and policymakers.*** **New Haven, CN: Yale University Press.**

This book provides a perspective on how parents can work with schools to achieve the best education for their children and all children. The authors draw on their own experiences as educational researchers, teachers, and parents to define a new set of educational basics. Oakes and Lipton argue persuasively that parents can make a difference in education and give specific recommendations to both parents and policymakers for improving education.

The authors suggest that policymakers can play a key role in mobilizing public commitment to education. They suggest that state and local regulations need to allow for teacher initiatives and creativity. Teachers need to be provided resources and technical assistance. They argue against top-down authority structures that maintain teachers' status as skilled workers and advocate for policies and programs that give teachers control over resources, classroom organization, content, and methods. Teachers need to be given training, materials, and opportunities to find creative ways to increase learning in the classroom and at home. Teachers need to be given opportunities to talk with other teachers and learn from one another.

The authors' suggestions for connecting school and home closely parallel their advice for reforming schools. When schools rid themselves of preferring standardization over innovation, they are free to explore all the avenues for working with families. Alliances with families, community groups, social service agencies, business and industry, and universities can help schools meet academic goals and can help families meet children's needs.

Palanki, A. & Burch, P. (with D. Davies). (1992). ***Mapping the policy landscape: What federal and state governments are doing to promote family-school-community partnerships.*** Report No. 7, Center on Families, Communities, Schools & Children's Learning. Boston, MA: Center on Families, Communities, Schools & Children's Learning.

This report outlines selected national, state, and local policy developments in 1991-92 in six areas related to family-school-community collaboration: interventions for infants and toddlers, family support, coordination of health and human services with education, parent choice, school restructuring, and Chapter 1. The report also develops an evaluative framework which looks at policy developments with seven criteria in mind: flexibility, intensity, continuity, universality, participation, coordination, and comprehensiveness.

Among the report's conclusions are:

(1) Many states have taken major initiatives in the six policy areas, but the activity across states is very uneven.

(2) Thirty states report some specific policy action on family support, parent education, or coordination of health, education, and other human services.

(3) Efforts to coordinate Head Start with other eduction, health and social services are currently underway at the Federal level.

(4) The U. S. Dept. of Education has increased its advocacy of the new flexibility in Chapter 1, but state and local response remains disappointing.

(5) There is increased interest in linking parent education and literacy with early childhood programs.

(6) Participation by families in policymaking has been broadened to include: (i) school-level governance; (ii) program planning and evaluation; (iii) state-level councils for facilitating coordination of services.

The authors conclude by calling for Federal, state, and local policymakers to take steps to actively coordinate policies that nurture family-school-community partnerships.

Rich, D. (1985). *The forgotten factor in school success: The family.* Washington, DC: The Home and School Institute.

This is a guide for policymakers about the importance of the family in school success. The guide has been written for educational leaders, policymakers, staff and constituents. The "20 Question Checklist" is of particular importance to Workshop #4. Answering "yes" to these questions ensures successful outcomes. The author reminds us that the school and the home are separate constituencies and policymakers must address the particular needs of each group.

Walberg, H. J. (1984). Improving the productivity of America's schools. *Educational Leadership, 41*, 19-27.

In his synthesis of 29 controlled studies of the past decade, Walberg found the 91 percent of the comparisons favored children in cooperative home-school programs. The effect was twice that of socioeconomic status, and some programs had effects ten times as large. The programs benefitted older as well as younger students. Walberg concludes that school parent programs to improve academic conditions in the home have an outstanding record of success in promoting achievement. He says that "the alterable curriculum of the home" is twice as predictive of academic learning as family socioeconomic status.

Warner, I. (1991). Parents in Touch: District leadership for parent involvement. *Phi Delta Kappan, 72*, 372-375.

As director of Parent in Touch, Indianapolis, the author describes a systemwide parent involvement program. The goal of the program is to facilitate two-way communication that enables parents to become partners with the schools. By working together schools and families can improve student achievement, attendance, and behavior.

Parents in Touch includes a wide variety of activities such as: parent/teacher conferences; dial-a-teacher; homework hotline, parent line/communicator; the Parent Focus Series; work-site seminars; Teachers Involve Parents in Schoolwork (TIPS); Superintendents Parent Advisory Council; and a Chapter 1 Program. The program is comprehensive and involves

F 98

all five of Epstein's key elements of parent involvement (support, communication, volunteers, learning activities at home, and decision making).

District-wide support for parent involvement is shown by allowances for adjusted hours for parent/teacher conferences. The school administration and the Indianapolis Education Association have reached an agreement so that teachers can meet with all parents early in the school year to establish communication through an individual conference.

The district also supports activity calendars, student/teacher/parent (STP) contracts, and STP folders. The activity calendars include suggestions for daily activities with children and provide information about holiday schedules, test dates, report card schedules, and community/school resources. The STP contracts are offered to parents by schools that choose to use them; they are prepared in triplicate and signed by parents, teachers and students and are agreements to fulfill certain obligations such as clear assignments and completing assignments. STP folders go home weekly and are returned to school; the folders contain students' completed assignments and information that helps parents monitor homework. Each grade level tailors the information sent home in calendars, but all families from grades K-12 receive materials from the school which explain the curriculum and keep parents informed.

Williams, D. L., Jr. and Chavkin, N. F. (1990). Essential elements of strong parent involvement programs. *Educational Leadership, 47*, 18-20.

The authors conducted a survey of promising programs in the southwestern United States using a "key informant" approach and identified seven essential elements of strong parent involvement programs. This research clearly indicates that after a written policy was implemented, much district support was needed. Successful programs all reported the following essential elements in their programs: a formal, written policy; administrative support (funds, materials/product resources e.g. meeting space, communication equipment, computers, duplication/media equipment, and staff); training (for staff as well as parents and community members); partnership approach (joint planning, goal setting, definitions of roles, program assessment, development of supports, needs sensing, setting standards); two-way communication (frequent and regular); networking (to share information, resources, and technical expertise); and evaluation (formative evaluations allow districts to make program revisions on a continuous basis).

OTHER RESOURCES:

The Council of Great City Schools. (1987). *Results in the Making*. Washington, DC: author.

Goodson, B.D., Swartz, J. P., Millsap, M. A., Spielman, S.C., Moss, M., & D'Angelo, D. (1991). *Working with families: Promising programs to help parents support young children's learning*. Final report for the U. S. Department of Education, Office of Planing, Budget and Evaluation. Washington, DC.

Videotape. American Association of School Administrators. *Parents . . . Partners in Education*.

Booklet. American Association of School Administrators. *Parents . . . Partners in Education*. Available in English, Spanish, Cambodian, Hmong, Lao, and Vietnamese.

Pamphlet. National Coalition for Parent Involvement in Education.

F99

NEXT STEPS IN DISTRICT PLANNING FOR HOME-SCHOOL PARTNERSHIPS

1. The policy areas that I would like to investigate are:
   (After group discussion, underline areas selected to investigate together)

2. People we should discuss the underlined policy areas with:

   a. In the school system:

   b. In the community.

   c. Resource people beyond the community:

3. The materials (literature, copies of policies, descriptions of programs) to consult are:

4. After getting the information in 2 and 3, our next steps would be:

Name: ______________________________ Date:__________ Phone:__________________

F106

NEXT STEPS IN DISTRICT PLANNING FOR HOME-SCHOOL PARTNERSHIPS

1. The policy areas that I would like to investigate are:
   (After group discussion, underline areas selected to investigate together)

2. People we should discuss the underlined policy areas with:

   a. In the school system:

   b. In the community.

   c. Resource people beyond the community:

3. The materials (literature, copies of policies, descriptions of programs) to consult are:

4. After getting the information in 2 and 3, our next steps would be:

Name: ______________________________ Date:__________ Phone:__________________

PARTICIPANT EVALUATION FORM

Building Home-School Partnerships for Learning

This has been a pilot workshop. Please help us revise it for wider use by answering the following questions.

Name of Workshop: ______________________________ Date: ____

School District: ______________________________ State: ____

Name of Your School or Organization: ________________________

1. What was the most helpful aspect of this workshop? Why?

2. What was the least helpful aspect of this workshop? Why?

3. If this workshop is presented again, what would you change and why?

I am (check one)

___ a K-3 grade teacher
___ a 4-6 grade teacher
___ a principal
___ another school site professional (specify) ______________
___ a school district staff member
___ a school district official
___ a parent
___ other (specify) ________________

Thank you for taking part in this workshop and giving us your thoughts on it. We hope you will find it useful in building stronger partnerships with the parents of your students.

G-6

Building Home-School Partnerships for Learning: Workshops for Urban Educators (Pilot Version)

APPENDICES

1. Strategies to Reach and Involve Parents

p1 Involving Parents in the Education of Their Children
3 Parent Involvement and the Education of Limited-English-Proficient Students
5 Working with Families - Program Guidance
6 Description of a Parent Center
7 A Home Learning Activities Calendar
8 Turning Parents Away - Words and Deeds to Avoid
9 Changing Problems into Possibilities
11 Little Things Make a Big Difference

2. Federal Government Programs

13 Department of Education Parent Involvement Initiatives
Chapter I: Policy Manual and Flexibility Guidelines Excerpts (see District Workbook Activity Sheets 2)
14 Family-School Partnership Program

3. Diverse Urban Families

15 Schools Helping Poor Hispanic Parents Strengthen Home Learning
23 The Puerto Rican Experience
26 The Chinese-American Experience
29 The Irish-American Experience
32 Black Americans
34 Southeast Asians
37 Reaching Out to Culturally Diverse Families

4. More Resources - Readings and Organizations

45 General Reading List
50 Descriptions of Resource Organizations
52 NCPIE Guide to Parent Involvement Resources

Workshop leaders may want to use these appendices for:

- descriptions of family life and home-school issues for racial, ethnic and immigrant groups in your school
- Chapter I requirements on parent involvement
- more strategies for building home-school partnerships
- further personal reading and contact with resource groups

The material in these appendices is only a selection of what is available. Please add whatever suits your own situation, and tell us of papers and reports we should consider adding. All material here may be reproduced freely. Permissions have been secured.

G-1

ERIC Clearinghouse on Elementary and Early Childhood Education
University of Illinois
805 West Pennsylvania Avenue
Urbana, Illinois 61801
(217) 333-1386

ERIC Digest

EDO-PS-89-3

Involving Parents in the Education of Their Children

Patricia Clark Brown

When parents are involved in their children's education, both children and parents are likely to benefit. Researchers report that parent participation in their children's schooling frequently:

- enhances children's self-esteem
- improves children's academic achievement
- improves parent-child relationships
- helps parents develop positive attitudes towards school and a better understanding of the schooling process.

Despite these advantages, it is not always easy for parents to find time and energy to become involved or to coordinate with schedules for school events. For some parents, a visit to school is perceived as an uncomfortable experience, perhaps a holdover from their own school days. Others may have their hands full with a job and other children. The availability and cost of babysitters are other factors. Recently, teachers and other school staff have made special efforts to increase communication with parents and encourage involvement in children's learning experiences.

Ways to Involve Parents

One kind of parental involvement is school-based and includes participating in parent-teacher conferences and functions, and receiving and responding to written communications from the teacher. Parents can also serve as school volunteers for the library or lunchroom, or as classroom aides. In one survey, almost all teachers reported talking with children's parents—either in person, by phone, or on open school nights—and sending notices home (Becker & Epstein, 1982). These methods, along with requests for parents to review and sign homework, were most frequently used to involve parents.

Parents can participate in their children's schools by joining Parent Teacher Associations (PTAs) or Parent Teacher Organizations (PTOs) and getting involved in decision-making about the educational services their children receive. Almost all schools have a PTA or PTO, but often only a small number of parents are active in these groups.

Another kind of involvement is home-based and focuses on activities that parents can do with their children at home or on the teacher's visits to the child's home. However, few teachers involve parents through home-based activities, partly because of the amount of time involved in developing activities or visiting and partly because of the difficulty of coordinating parents' and teachers' schedules.

Ways to Reach Parents

Some programs aim to reach parents who do not usually participate in their children's education. Such programs provide flexible scheduling for school events and parent-teacher conferences, inform parents about what their children are learning, and help parents create a supportive environment for children's learning at home.

Many schools have responded to the needs of working parents by scheduling conferences in the evening as well as during the day, and by scheduling school events at different times of the day throughout the year.

It is important for teachers to keep the lines of communication open. This involves not only sending regular newsletters and notes, but also obtaining information from parents. Phone calls are a greatly under-used technique for keeping in touch. A teacher usually calls a parent to report a child's inappropriate behavior or academic failure. But teachers can use phone calls to let parents know about positive behavior and to get input. Parents justifiably become defensive if they think that every phone call will bring a bad report. If teachers accustom parents to receiving regular calls just for keeping in touch, it is easier to discuss problems when they occur.

Teachers need to consider families' lifestyles and cultural backgrounds when planning home activities. However, some activities can be adapted to almost any home situation. These are activities that parents or children engage in on a day-to-day basis. Teachers can encourage parents and children to do these activities together, and can focus on the opportunities that the activities provide for learning. For example, although television viewing is a pastime for

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

most children and adults, they do not often watch shows together. Teachers can suggest appropiate programs and send home questions for families to discuss. This discussion can be carried over into class.

Busy parents can include children in such everyday activities as preparing a meal or grocery shopping. Teachers can also suggest that parents set aside a time each day to talk with their children about school. Parents may find this difficult if they have little idea of what occurs in school. Notes on what the children have been working on are helpful. Parents and children can discuss current events using teacher-provided questions. Teachers often suggest the activity of reading aloud to children. Reading to children is an important factor in increasing their interest and ability in reading. Teachers can also encourage children to read to parents. In areas where children may not have many books, schools can lend books, and teachers can provide questions for parents and children to discuss.

Home activities allow parents flexibility in scheduling, provide opportunities for parents and children to spend time together, and offer a relaxed setting. To be most beneficial, home activities should be interesting and meaningful—not trivial tasks that parents and children have to "get through." When teachers plan home activities, they often think in terms of worksheets or homework that will reinforce skills learned in school. But parents often grow tired of the endless stream of papers to be checked and the time spent on "busywork." Another danger of promoting home activities is the possibility that there may arise an unclear distinction of roles, with teachers expecting parents to "teach" at home. Teachers and parents need to understand that their roles are different, and that their activities with children should be different.

Difficulties in Involving Parents

All teachers experience the frustration of trying to involve parents and getting little response. Teachers complain that parents do not come to conferences or school open houses, check homework, or answer notes. This leads some teachers to conclude that parents do not care about their children's education. While it is true that the emotional problems of a few parents may be so great as to prevent them from becoming involved with their children's education, most parents do care a great deal. This caring is not, however, always evidenced by parent attendance at school events. There are a number of reasons why these parents may not become involved, and teachers need to consider these before dismissing parents as uninterested.

For many parents, a major impediment to becoming involved is lack of time. Working parents are often unable to attend school events during the day. In addition, evenings are the only time these parents have to spend with their children, and they may choose to spend time with their family rather than attend meetings at school.

For many apparently uninvolved parents school was not a positive experience and they feel inadequate in a school setting. Parents may also feel uneasy if their cultural style or socioeconomic level differ from those of teachers (Greenberg, 1989). Some parents who are uninvolved in school may not understand the importance of parent involvement or may think they do not have the skills to be able to help. Even parents who are confident and willing to help may hesitate to become involved for fear of overstepping their bounds. It is the responsibility of teachers and administrators to encourage such parents to become involved.

Conclusion

The suggestions offered in this digest can help teachers involve parents who might not otherwise be involved. While it is possible for a teacher to implement such a parent involvement program alone, it is much easier if the school as a whole is committed to the program. Administrative staff can relieve some of the burden of implementing a comprehensive parent involvement program, and can offer help and support to teachers.

For More Information

Becher, R. (1987). *Parent Involvement: A Review of Research and Principles of Successful Practice.* ED 247 032.

Becker, H. J. & Epstein, J. L. (1982). "Parent Involvement: A Survey of Teacher Practices." *Elementary School Journal*, 83, 2, 85-102.

DeKanter, A., Ginsburg, A., & Milne, A. (1986). *Parent Involvement Strategies: A New Emphasis on Traditional Parent Roles.* ED 293 919.

Greenberg, P. (1989). "Parents As Partners in Young Children's Development and Education: A New American Fad? Why Does It Matter?" *Young Children*, 44, 4, 61-75.

McLaughlin, M. & Shields, P. (1986). *Involving Parents in the Schools: Lessons for Policy.* ED 293 920.

Stevenson, D. & Baker, D. (1987). "The Family-School Relation and the Child's School Performance." *Child Development*, 58, 5, 1348-57.

ERIC Digests are in the public domain and may be freely reproduced and disseminated.

This publication was funded by the Office of Educational Research and Improvement, U.S. Department of Education. Opinions expressed in this report do not necessarily reflect the positions or policies of OERI.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

G-3

ERIC CLEARINGHOUSE ON LANGUAGES AND LINGUISTICS

ERIC Digest

Parent Involvement and The Education of Limited-English-Proficient Students

Prepared by Carmen Simich-Dudgeon

December, 1986

Over the last two decades, there has been a growing body of research evidence suggesting that there are important benefits to be gained by elementary-age schoolchildren when their parents provide support, encouragement and direct instruction in the home, as well as maintain good communications[1] with the school--activities which are known as "parent involvement". Such findings have led researchers and school personnel to apply parent involvement techniques at higher grade levels and with limited-English-proficient and non-English-proficient (LEP/NEP) students as well. The results to date have been encouraging.

What Activities Constitute Parent Involvement?

In general, parents may become involved by:

- providing a home environment that supports children's arning needs;
- volunteering to provide assistance in the school as teachers' aides, secretaries, or in other roles;
- becoming activists and decision-makers in organizations such as the local PTA/PTO, or community advocacy groups that advise local school boards and school districts;
- attending school-sponsored activities;
- maintaining open channels of communication with the teacher(s) and continually monitoring children's progress in school;
- tutoring the children at home, using specific learning activities designed by the teacher to reinforce work being done in school (Epstein, 1986).

While most of the activities listed above are undertaken on the initiative of parents, the last activity--parent-as-tutor involvement--is, or should be, initiated by the teacher. Schools with newly-established parent involvement programs have noted that parents are willing to become involved, but that they do not know *how* to help their children with academic tasks at home, and in general, are fearful of doing more harm than good. To counteract this, the teacher must maintain contact with the parents, giving specific assistance with materials and tutoring techniques that will successfully reinforce the work being done in school (Simich, 1986; Epstein, 1985a).

Parent involvement in the education of high school students, on the other hand, requires that the parent become co-learner, ilitator and collaborator, a means of support as the high ool-age student develops independence and explores future ucational options.

What Are Some Special Aspects of LEP/NEP Parent Involvement?

For the growing numbers of limited- or non-English-proficient parents, parent involvement of any kind in the school process is a new cultural concept. Moreover, attempts by teachers and school officials to involve such parents in the education of their children is very often interpreted as a call for interference. The overwhelming majority of LEP/NEP parents believe that the school has not only the qualifications, but the responsibility to educate their children, and that any amount of parent "interference" is certain to be counter-productive. The most imporant task, then, in involving LEP/NEP parents in their children's education is to acculturate them to the meaning of parent involvement in their new social environment.

While most LEP/NEP parents do not have the English language proficiency to engage in many of the typical parent involvement activities, they may be very successfully involved in parent-school collaboration at home. These parents can be taught to reinforce educational concepts in the native language and/or English. Additionally, bilingual community liaisons should be available to bridge language and cultural differences between home and school. An added advantage, of course, is that LEP/NEP parents improve their own general knowledge, language and survival skills as a result of their participation in the program.

What Evidence Is There to Support The Need for Parent Involvement?

Epstein (1985b) has concluded, "the evidence is clear that parental encouragement, activities and interest at home, and parental participation in schools and classrooms positively influence achievement, even after the students' ability and family socioeconomic status are taken into account." Moreover, there may be evidence to support the conclusion that the most useful variety of parent involvment is the contact that parents have with their children in the home when such contact is used to encourage and aid school achievement. Significant findings from several parent involvement programs show that:

- Parent involvement in academic activities with children at home consistently and significantly improves parents' knowledge and expertise in helping their children, as well as their ability to effectively evaluate teachers' merits (Bennett, 1986);

Center for Applied Linguistics (CAL)
1118 22nd Street., NW
Washington, DC 20037

- Direct parental involvement at home with children's school work has positive effects on such things as school attendance, classroom behavior, and parent-teacher relations (Gillum, 1977; Rich et al., 1979; Comer, 1980);
- Students who are part of parent involvement programs show higher reading achievement than children who are not. Hewison and Tizard (1980) found that "children encouraged to read to their parents, and to talk with their parents about their reading, had markedly higher reading gains than children who did not have this opportunity." Moreover, small group instruction during the school day by highly competent specialists *did not produce* gains comparable to those obtained in parental involvement programs. Results of a longitudinal study of 300 3rd and 5th grade students in Baltimore City show that from fall to spring, students whose teachers were leaders in the use of parent involvement made greater gains in reading achievement than did students whose teachers were not recognized for encouraging parent involvement (Epstein, 1985b).

Do These Findings Apply to LEP/NEP Students?

In the study conducted by Hewison and Tizard mentioned above, several of the participating parents were non-English-proficient and/or illiterate, a condition that neither prevented the parents from collaborating with the school, nor the children from showing marked improvement in reading ability.

A more recent study, the three-year Trinity-Arlington Teacher and Parent Training for School Success Project, has shown the most comprehensive findings to date concerning parent involvement and limited-English proficiency. This project, the result of a collaboration between Trinity College in Washington, DC and the Arlington, VA Public Schools, was designed to cilitate the acquisition of English language skills by high chool LEP students from four language backgrounds (Khmer, Lao, Spanish and Vietnamese) through the development of supportive relationships among the students, parents and school staff. The role of the parent-as-tutor was stressed and facilitated by community liaisons proficient in the native language of the parents. Parents were shown how to collaborate, to be co-learners with their high school-age children in the completion of specially-designed home lessons from the Vocationally-Oriented Bilingual Curriculum (VOBC), a supplement to the ESL program which was in use at the implementation site.

Several locally-developed and nationally-validated measures of English proficiency were administered to the students. Additionally, both parents and students were administered a content test to provide evidence of cultural knowledge gained as a result of the VOBC information exchanged between parent and student. The study showed positively that the VOBC home lessons reinforced ESL concepts and language skills taught to students during regular ESL classroom instruction. Significant gains were also recorded in the English language and survival skills of the parents; and, as a result of their collaboration on the VOBC home lessons, parents and students alike learned a great deal about life in America and about the American school system.

In many LEP/NEP households, parents worked two or three jobs and were often not available to work with their children on the VOBC home lessons. Likewise, many students were naccompanied minors and/or heads of household, and did not e the luxury of parental involvement. Such cases highlighted nother very important finding: in households where parents were not available to work with their children, interaction with guardians and siblings over the VOBC home lessons often provided the same positive reinforcement as when parents participated, possible evidence that home activities could be even more productive if the whole family were to be involved in their completion (Simich, 1986).

How Can School Districts Initiate An LEP/NEP Parent Involvement Program?

To develop a parent-as-tutor, collaborator or co-learner program, the collaboration of all school personnel is essential. Regular classroom teachers, ESL teachers, counselors, and administrators should receive training in how to develop better home and school collaboration with LEP/NEP parents and how to involve them in the education of their children. An essential component of the parent involvement effort is the bilingual community liaison, a highly respected member of the parents' language community who is knowledgeable about the American school system.

Information on the VOBC, Teacher's Guide to the VOBC, a training videotape to supplement the VOBC and other materials developed by the Trinity-Arlington Project may be obtained by writing the National Clearinghouse for Bilingual Education, 11501 Georgia Avenue, Wheaton, MD 20907; (301)933-9448 or (800)647-0123.

References

Bennett, W.J. (1986). *First lessons: a report on elementary education in America.* Washington, DC: Department of Education.

Crespo, O.I. (comp.). (1984). *Parent involvement in the education of minority language children. A resource handbook.* Rosslyn, VA: National Clearinghouse for Bilingual Education. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 261 540)

Comer, J.P. (1980). *School Prose.* New York, NY: Free Press.

Epstein, J.L. (1986). Parent involvement: implications for limited-English-proficient parents. In C. Simich-Dudgeon (ed). *Issues of parent involvement and literacy.* Washington, DC: Trinity College.

Epstein, J.L. (1985b). *Effects of teacher practices of parent involvement on change in student achievement in reading and math.* Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University, Center for Social Organization of Schools.

Epstein, J.L. (1985a). Home and school connections in schools of the future: implications of research on parent involvement. *Peabody Journal of Education (62):* 18-41.

Gillum, R.M. (1977). *The effects of parent involvement on student achievement in three Michigan performance contracting programs.* Paper presented at the American Educational Research Association Annual Meeting.

Hewison, J. and J. Tizard. (1980). Parental involvement and reading attainment. *British Journal of Educational Psychology (50):* 209-215.

Rich, D., J. Van Dien and B. Mallox. (1979). Families as educators of their own children. In R. Brandt (ed.). *Partners: parents and schools.* Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

Simich-Dudgeon, C. (1986). *Trinity-Arlington parent involvement project, Final Report.* Submitted to the Office of Bilingual Education and Minority Affairs. Washington, DC: Department of Education.

OERI
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
US Department of Education

This report was prepared with funding from the Office of Educational Research and Improvement, U.S. Department of Education, under contract no. 400-86-0019. The opinions expressed in this report do not necessarily reflect the positions or policies of OERI or ED.

Working with Families

Program Guidance

Specific program level guidance is found in a recent report by Goodson, Swartz and Millsap (February 1991) entitled **Working with Families**. Although the focus of the report is on promising programs designed to help parents support young children's learning, findings indicate how program policies and goals result in a wide spectrum of participation strategies and resulting benefits to families.

- Each family education program highlighted in the document has empowering parents to become successful teachers of their children as its primary emphasis. "Empowerment" strategies often address those problems parents face that interfere with their participation in the school's program, such as low literacy, isolation and powerlessness. Practical concerns such as nutrition, child development, discipline, child and spouse abuse, and chemical addictions are also addressed.
- All programs provide multiple levels of parent participation, viewing any contact with parents as positive.
- Programs recognize that different ways of participating require different skills of parents and offer differing opportunities. For example, home visits are effective for working with parents who have few group process skills and low self-esteem. However, unlike group meetings, home visits do not require parents to interact with the school or provide them with opportunities to connect with other parents and to develop self-confidence.
- Programs provide services that ease families' transitions across types of participation--from individual to small group services, from home to school settings.
- Programs adapt to the varied literacy levels of families.
- Programs are flexible (e.g., in scheduling, attendance requirements, location) in order to include the most disadvantaged and disorganized families.
- Programs use numerous techniques to create bonds between parents and the program (e.g., formalized commitment represented by a contract or certificate, support groups, etc.).

Goodson, B.D., Swartz, J.P. and Millsap, M.A. (February 1991). **Working with families: Promising programs to help parents support young children's learning.** Cambridge, MA: Abt Associates, Inc.

Description of a Parent Center

Washington Elementary District, Phoenix, Arizona

The Parent Center is housed in a vacant classroom at Sahuaro Elementary School, and is used by parents from throughout the district. Washington Elementary District serves students from diverse backgrounds and community, economically and ethnically. Financial support comes from federal Chapter I, state K-3 At Risk , and local Community Education funds. The Director is a certified teacher trained in parenting skills; however, not all staff members are certified teachers.

The classroom set-up reflects the variety of activities which occur in the Parent Center. One area is designed as a children's play area including homemaking and science/creative activities. Another portion of the room is set aside for workshops and meetings with parents. Bookshelves with resource books available for checkout to parents, and a toy lending library for children line the walls. There is also a children's library. At the hospitality area, refreshments are available for parents who drop in. The room set-up provides an environment where the children can play without adult intervention, thus allowing parents to interact freely with the Director. Child care is provided during parenting classes. can talk with the Center staff or teachers without interruption.

Among the activities provided by the Parent Center are:
- Parent discussion group on various topics weekly.
- "Parents as Partners in Reading" Workshop--parents and children attend a 1 1/2 hour session together.
- Newsletter sent to parents once a month.
- Active Parenting classes.
- Special interest parent classes monthly--example: How to Develop Responsibility in Children

The Parent Center is publicized through school newsletters and parent-teacher conferences. At the time of school dismissal, the greatest number of parents visit the center.

This site based model is now being replicated in other schools in the district. Many visitors have expressed interest in developing this as a way to increase parent involvement.

Becky Cairo
Director, Parenting Center

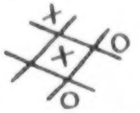
EXHIBIT 127

A Home Learning Activities Calendar

Reprinted with permission from the 1984-85 Parent/Child Activities Calendar Grade 4 Dade County Public Schools Miami, FL

FEBRUARY

Listen to your child - a child's thoughts are as important as an adult's.

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
FEBRUARY IS BLACK HISTORY MONTH					1 Help your child put up a bulletin board in his/her room to demonstrate his/her accomplishments. NO SCHOOL TEACHER PLANNING DAY	2 Have your child tell you another conclusion to a TV movie he/she has seen.
3 Discuss what life for a fourth grader would have been like in George Washington's time.	4 Have your child arrange the following groups of words in alphabetical order. code book can't bike clam bake	5 Ask your child to choose a game and play it with him/her. Have fun today!	6 Have your child arrange the words swing, on, the, played, and Tommy so they make a complete sentence.	7 Discuss with your child the reasons many people go jogging every morning.	8 Have your child look in today's newspaper to find the weather. Find out about the temperature and weather conditions.	9 Have your child arrange the following words in alphabetical order. stamp star stand stack
10 Discuss with your child the difference between life in the country and life in the city. Ask your child to draw pictures of city and country scenes.	11 Help your child draw an X-ray picture of a person showing the heart, lungs, and stomach. 	12 Have your child subtract 1863, the date of Lincoln's death, from 1985 to find out how long ago he died. LINCOLN'S BIRTHDAY	13 Play a few games of Tic-Tac-Toe with your child. 	14 From cardboard, have your child cut out a heart, write a short message on it, and give the heart to a friend. VALENTINE'S DAY	15 Have your child write his/her telephone number and then a friend's underneath it. Ask: "What is their sum?"	16 Ask: "Which is the better buy, five pounds of potatoes for forty cents or ten pounds for seventy-five cents?"
17 Have your child make up a word problem for this equation. 17 - 8 = ?	18 Ask your child to write the contractions of the following words. do not can not have not will not NO SCHOOL ALL PRESIDENTS DAY	19 After reading a newspaper article to your child, have him/her make up a headline for the story.	20 Show your child some pictures that show movement. Ask him/her to describe the action and give each picture a title. ASH WEDNESDAY	21 Ask: "What would it be like if we went to the movies every day instead of to school?"	22 Have your child determine how old George Washington would be today subtracting his birthdate, 1732, from 1985. WASHINGTON'S BIRTHDAY	23 Walk through a park. Discuss the effect that weather conditions may have upon the park; e.g., hurricane, drought.
24 Have your child count by 2's, 3's, and 4's while he/she is jumping rope or running in place. 	25 Ask: If you divide thirty-five pieces of candy evenly among seven friends, how many pieces of candy will each friend receive?"	26 Have your child make up a story about a picture you point out in the newspaper. 	27 Have your child identify the fraction 1½ on this number line. 0 1/2 1 2	28 Tell your child that 'leap year' occurs every fourth year and that the last one was in 1984. Ask: "When is the next leap year going to be?"		

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

G-8

Turning Parents Away—Words and Deeds to Avoid

DON'T	DO
Communication	
• Contact parents only when there is a problem (especially if there has been no positive contact previously).	• Send lots of positive messages to parents. Reinforce the child's progress, especially if having difficulty with school work.
• Talk down to parents.	• Show respect in your body language and words.
• Contact parents only after a problem has gotten out of hand.	• Contact parents at the first sign of problems such as absences, grade slippage, failure to return homework, etc.
• Contact parents when you don't have a plan of action of what the school is prepared to do to help their child.	• Develop contacts and identify personnel and other community agencies that can provide support and services to families.
• Send information only in English when parents speak other languages.	• Identify personnel at the site, district, or community who can translate.
Parents as Supporters	
• Establish groups (cliques) that exclude other parents.	• Recruit new parents and help them feel welcome and knowledgeable.
• Keep parent groups isolated and separated from each other or from the life of the school.	• Develop an integrated approach so that all groups work on common goals.
Parents as Learners	
• Organize parent workshops in which parents have not been included in the planning.	• Involve parents in planning all parent involvement activities.
• Hold workshops at times the majority cannot or will not attend.	• Survey parents for the most convenient times. Offer the same workshop at alternate times.
• Hold workshops only in English when the majority speak other languages.	• Offer the same/similar workshop in different languages.
Parents as Teachers	
• Blame parents for low student achievement; ask them to assume major teaching roles.	• Help parents see how much their child has grown under the school's guidance.
Parents as Advisors and Decision Makers	
• Call a school council meeting on short notice, neglect to send an agenda in advance, or provide backup material.	• Develop a yearly calendar of meetings, send an agenda, backup material, and reminder notices before each meeting.
• Organize meetings where only the school staff does the talking.	• Indicate on the agenda, items that will require discussion and decision making.

(Used with permission.

From Home and School Partners for STudent Success: A Handbook for Principals,
by Janet Chrispeels, Beatrice Fernandez and Jeana Preston. San Diego City Schools.

Changing Problems Into Possibilities

Problem: No one at the school speaks the language of the parent.

Solutions:

1. Identify students who could serve as interpreters, other than the parent's own child.
2. Identify community members who would be willing to be volunteer or paid interpreters.
3. Recruit paraprofessionals who are native speakers.
4. Work with appropriate district offices to be sure that all critical school policies and information are translated into parent languages represented at the school.

Problem: Parents do not attend scheduled meetings.

Solutions:

1. Make sure the purpose of the meeting is clear and important to parents.
2. Involve parents in planning all parent meetings.
3. Provide at least three weeks advance notice of meetings and call or send a follow-up reminder. It is especially effective if parents of a particular language or ethnic group contact fellow parents.
4. Set an attendance target and brainstorm with teachers and parents how to meet the goal (e.g., how many parents have to be personally called to have 25 parents attend?).
5. Plan alternate ways of sharing information that will be presented at workshops with those parents unable to attend (e.g., by videotaping the session, providing a printed summary, asking parents who attend to call or discuss the workshop with another parent).
6. Have students write a letter of invitation to parents.
7. Provide incentives to teachers for encouraging parent participation.
8. Provide child care.
9. Involve students in the meeting for at least part of the time. Grade or class level meetings usually have the highest attendance.
10. Provide transportation

(Reprinted with permission from Home and School Partners for Student Success: A Handbook for Principals. By Janet Chrispeels, Beatrice Fernandez and Jeana Preston San Diego City Schools, 1990.

11. Hold meetings (sometimes with the same agenda) at different places and different times so that all parents can attend. This is especially critical for VEEP and Magnet schools.

12. Plan parent education programs in a series of three to four workshops on a topic and hold them a week or two apart; then take a break.

13. Offer workshops targeted to a particular grade level or ethnic group, especially if the workshop needs to be offered in languages other than English.

14. Evaluate the meeting and use the information to plan future meetings.

15. Ask parents who attend meetings to be a buddy for one or two other parents and personally call, invite, and provide transportation for them to the meetings.

16. Review the Communication Checklist in the Home-School Partnership Planner to be sure all "the bases have been covered".

Problem: Teachers don't have time to involve parents.

Solutions:

1. Recognize teachers who have made time and have them share their tips and strategies at faculty meetings.

2. Develop schoolwide approaches that help all teachers (e.g., preprinted postcards and letters, assignment calendars, grade level homework packets, homework folders for primary grades, binders with tabs for upper grades and secondary students, parenting tip sheets that teachers can send to parents).

3. Use some staff development time to help teachers develop conferencing and other communication skills that increase their confidence in working with parents.

4. Use grade level or department teams to plan back-to-school curriculum meetings, grade level/course objectives, expectancies, and homework rules. It reduces the work any one teacher has to do and sends a consistent message to parents and students.

5. Make a commitment in the school site plan to call a set number of parents each week with positive messages, to send weekly/biweekly progress reports, and to publish a monthly class newsletter or send home lesson plans. Allocate resources to support the commitment (e.g., stamps, stationery for teachers, extra portable telephone to be passed from class to class for positive phone calls).

6. Ask your PTA or parent group to use some of their people and financial resources to support your teacher communication efforts. For example, the PTA/parent group can address and distribute to teachers preprinted postcards or letters for each child in each class.

EST COPY AVAILABLE

6-11

The Little Things Make a Big Difference

How to help your children succeed in school

National Association
of Elementary
School Principals
and
World Book
Educational Products

FACT SHEET

New Video Shows Parents How "The Little Things Make A Big Difference"

As children head back to school, many parents are looking for ways to help their children improve their school performance. The answers are as close as the local Blockbuster video store, where an important new video is available for free rental.

Title:	"The Little Things Make A Big Difference"
Background:	Seeing an acute need for parent resources on specific ways to help their children succeed in school, the National Association of Elementary School Principals and World Book Educational Products developed this video and a companion booklet. They are based on a survey of nearly 10,000 elementary and middle school principals in the U.S. and Canada.
Content:	The video and booklet take parents through the six critical areas for improving their children's school performance: -- Reinforcing self-esteem -- Developing good work habits -- Supporting academics -- Participating in stimulating activities -- Emphasizing language development -- Maintaining high, but realistic, academic expectations
Format:	The 16-minute video speaks directly to parents, detailing how each area influences children's learning and giving specific tips and ideas to help. Parents also hear from real children who tell how their parents fare.

-more-

Uses: The video and booklet were developed to be used by parents at home and by principals, teachers and parents in PTA and other meetings and conferences at school.

Availability: The videotape is available for free rental from all 1,700 Blockbuster video stores.

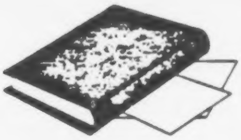
The tape and multiple copies of the booklet are also available to principals and PTA groups for purchase from the National Association of Elementary School Principals. The tape is $19.95 (25% discount for NAESP and PTA members) and booklets are 25¢ each (minimum of 25, 25% discount applies). For an order form write to:

The National Association of Elementary School Principals
Educational Products
1615 Duke Street
Alexandria, VA 22314

Parents who want a free copy of the brochure should write:

World Book Educational Products
Station 9/NAESP
101 Northwest Point Boulevard
Elk Grove Village, IL 60007
(Please enclose a self-addressed, stamped envelope)
or call 1-800-621-8202

# # #



Department of Education Parent Involvement Initiatives

The U.S. Department of Education supports a number of programs and activities to increase the involvement of parents in their children's education. Initiatives range from programs designed to involve parents in their young children's literacy development to family–school partnership demonstrations to research centers studying families and home–school connections. Some of the Department's recent parent involvement initiatives are highlighted below.

Within the Office of Elementary and Secondary Education (OESE), the Chapter I program to aid schools with many low-income students now requires stronger local parent involvement efforts. Projects are required to inform parents of activities and consult regularly with them, to train teachers and other school staff to work effectively with parents, to help parents work with their children at home, and to ensure full participation by those who lack literacy skills or fluency in English. Regional technical assistance centers support the work of local Chapter I projects. These centers are assisted by a national Chapter I Parent Involvement Center which collects, organizes, and disseminates information via the regional centers to help Chapter I projects develop plans to involve parents in their children's education.

Another OESE program, Even Start, provides assistance to instructional programs that combine adult literacy outreach with training to enable parents to support the educational growth of their children in and out of school. It aims to integrate early childhood education (birth to age 7) and adult education. The Office of Bilingual and Minority Languages administers the Family English Literacy Program, which helps limited-English-proficient adults gain competence in English, improve parenting skills, and increase home–school collaboration.

The White House Initiative on Educational Excellence for Hispanic Americans, established in the Department of Education, is charged with strengthening the nation's capacity to provide quality education for Hispanic Americans. The initiative will emphasize parental involvement, particularly the responsibility of families and parents to be teachers of their children and advocates for their children's education.

The Office of Special Education Programs supports a network of 60 Parent Training and Information (PTI) centers in all 50 states and Puerto Rico to enable parents to participate more effectively with professionals in meeting the educational needs of children with disabilities. Another program, Technical Assistance to Parent Projects, provides technical assistance and coordination to the 60 PTIs and to developing minority programs in urban and rural locations.

The Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI) supports a new center on Families, Communities, Schools, and Children's Learning. Over the next five years, this center will conduct research, development, policy analysis, and dissemination projects to provide new information about how families, communities, and schools foster student motivation, learning, and development, and how to improve the connections among these social institutions. This center is a consortium headed by Boston University. Another new center, on Education in the Inner Cities, located at Temple University, will study the role of families in the educational process and ways to enhance the family's contribution to education from a multicultural perspective. The recently awarded Southwest Educational Development Laboratory contract will promote home and school connections for at-risk students in its five-state region during the next 5 years.

Also within OERI, the Fund for the Improvement and Reform of Schools and Teaching (FIRST) sponsors demonstration grants through its Family–School Partnership Program to eligible Chapter I local education agencies for projects that increase the involvement of parents in their children's education. Thirty-one new awards were made by FIRST in September 1990.

Other programs and initiatives supported by the U.S. government and private organizations are highlighted in this issue.

(From The ERIC Review, Vol. I, Issue 3, Sept. 1991)

FAMILY-SCHOOL PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM

This program of the U.S. Department of Education sponsors demonstration grants to eligible Chapter I local education agencies for projects that increase the involvement of parents in their children's education. For example, the Program provides parents with classes such as literacy and math and also offers programs to enhance parenting skills. It can also be used to train school staff to work more effectively as educational partners with parents.

In August, 1992 the Department announced $2.6 million in new grants to provide training for disadvantaged parents in ways to improve their preschool children's chances of success in school. Eighteen new grants ranged from $65,000 to $195,000 with projects lasting from one to three years. In other years elementary and/or secondary education may be targeted.

For more information contact: Fund for Improvement and Reform of Schools and Teaching, U.S. Department of Education, 555 New Jersey Ave., NW, Washington, DC 20208-5524. Telephone: (202) 219-1496.

G-15

Schools Helping
Poor Hispanic Parents Strengthen
Home Learning

How Differences among Hispanic groups
affect their orientation to school
and prospects for home learning.

What special strengths and beliefs
of Hispanic parents affect their
relationship with schools.

How schools can build on Hispanic strengths.

Are Hispanics All The Same?

Hispanics in the United States are not a homogeneous group. Although united by a common language and an origin in Spanish colonization, they are separated by age, race, socioeconomic status, geography, the nature of their arrival—immigration, migration, exile, or asylum—and by the length of their residence here, as well as by their country of origin.

In 1990 the Hispanic population had reached 22.4 million, about ninety percent of whom were concentrated in the urban centers of nine states: Florida, New York, Illinois, Texas, California, Arizona, New Jersey, New Mexico and Colorado. Nearly two-thirds of all U.S. Hispanics are of Mexican origin. Fourteen percent have roots in either Central or South American countries, ten percent are Puerto Ricans and five percent Cubans. Other Hispanics constitute the remaining seven percent.

Despite Hispanic diversity of background, custom and tradition, it is income and education level that have the greatest effect on how Hispanics relate to schools and home learning. Most middle-income Hispanics fulfill schools' expectations for parent involvement. Many poorer parents, on the other hand, share common beliefs that serve as barriers to parents as teachers. This paper, therefore, addresses the needs of the sixty-two percent of Hispanic families who fall below the national median family-income level. Much of the information this short document conveys grew out of a three-year national project sponsored by the Hispanic Policy Development Project (HPDP), during which forty-two programs explored a wide variety of activities designed to involve poor Hispanic parents in their children's formal education. Some of the programs were extraordinarily successful. Others tried but failed. Both failures and successes provided valuable insights into why schools and poor Hispanic parents often are unable to connect.

"How To" Comments
From: Siobhan Nicolau
Hispanic Policy Development Project
36 East 22nd Street
New York, N.Y. 10010

G-16

Why Poor Hispanic Parents Are Not More Involved in Their Children's Formal Education

Most low-income Hispanic parents want their children to succeed in school. But the vast majority of low-income, newly-arrived Hispanic parents, and many low-income Hispanics born in the United States, do not know that the expectations of schools in the U.S. are different from the expectations of schools in their countries of origin or in their parents' countries of origin. As a consequence, many poor Hispanic youngsters, like many other low-income children, come into the classroom unprepared to tackle school work that their middle-class peers find easy because their parents have not known how to provide them with the social, linguistic and cognitive skills U. S. teachers expect.

What Are the Differences in Expectations?
How Do They Affect Hispanic Parenting?

In Latin-American countries the role of parents and the role of school in relation to education are sharply delineated and divided; Parents have a serious duty to instill respect and proper behavior in their children. That is a parent's job. It is the school's job to instill knowledge. Teaching is not the parents' business and most low-income parents are unaware of specific practices—such as talking and reading to children, and encouraging their curiosity—that lay the academic skills foundation.

Furthermore, some Hispanic parents are reluctant to place preschoolers in institutional care, while still others find that it is unavailable or unaffordable. As a consequence, less than a quarter of Hispanic youngsters enter kindergarten with any preschool or daycare experience. Many have never been out of their immediate neighborhoods.

Additionally many low-income Hispanic parents are uninformed about the value of free out-of-school activities—such as trips to parks, zoos, museums and libraries—that may provide a solid base for understanding the larger world and may reinforce what youngsters learn in class every day. Deeply concerned for the safety of their children, some Hispanic parents do not allow their children to participate in school field trips.

While most Hispanic parents understand that children should do their homework, few have been exposed to the idea that school-age children should, as Dr. Reginald Clark proposes, spend up to 20 hours a week engaged in other "constructive" home learning activities, such as reading for fun, writing, pursuing hobbies, talking with adult family members, or playing games in the family and watching educational television.

Yet Hispanic parents take parenting very seriously. They work hard to teach their children essential social skills such as cooperation and loyalty, and they deliver them to the school neat, well disciplined and respectful. These are all positive values, greatly appreciated by teachers. However, *respectful* in Hispanic culture often is expressed by not looking adults in the eye, not speaking to adults unless spoken to first, not volunteering answers, and not asking questions. Teachers unfamiliar with the culture can interpret this behavior as rudeness or withdrawal, or just plain excessive shyness.

Because many poor Hispanic parents have not had the opportunity to attend high school, they often do not themselves have wide vocabularies in Spanish or English. In addition, casual conversation between adults and children and reading to children is not the norm in many Hispanic poor households. As a consequence, many youngsters enter school without the language command enjoyed by most middleclass children. This causes a problem for both English-speaking, Spanish-speaking and bilingual children. The monolingual Spanish-speaking children, however, face two hurdles when they enter the education system—they must accelerate their linguistic development *and* learn a new language in order to succeed in U.S. schools.

Many Hispanic parents—like other poor parents—are unaware of the crucial role they can play in supporting their children's school accomplishment in the home. Hispanics respect the school system deeply. But they tend to relate to it as most Americans relate to doctors or lawyers or priests—with awe. In their view, schools are in control and teachers are the experts who are not to be questioned. They do not feel that they have any role to play in the education process and they do not think that they belong in school unless their child has been causing trouble. **However, the strong respect for schools that now works to restricts parents' teaching, can be harnessed to strengthen home learning.** The key lies in reaching out to the parents in a sensitive non-threatening manner and *explaining how the system here works.* Remember, most Hispanic parents want their children to succeed.

Why Haven't More Schools Recognized Why Poor Hispanic Parental Involvement Is Low?

A goodly portion of school personnel are unfamiliar with the family traditions and life realities of the Hispanic parents whose children are rapidly filling their classrooms. And few teachers or administrators are offered guidance or training to help them interpret Hispanic behavior, reach out to Hispanic parents, or understand the considerable strengths Hispanics can bring to the education process. Left on their own, perplexed by the behavior of parents and children alike, they tend to misread. They take the reserve, the non-confrontational manners, and the non-involvement of Hispanic parents to mean that the parents are uncaring, passive and uninterested in their children's education. And the children's respectful demeanor and reluctance to ask questions or volunteer answers, can be mistaken for passive resistance. Language compounds the problem and the teachers are understandably frustrated. In the teachers' view, the children aren't learning as they should and the parents don't seem to be helping.

What Can Be Done About It?

The isolation that exists between so many Hispanic families and the schools their children attend need not prevail. The findings of the Hispanic Policy Development Project's forty-two programs showed that schools that sincerely wanted to bridge the gap and were willing to extend themselves, enjoyed extraordinary success in involving parents in their children's education.

The experience of the successful programs sponsored by the Hispanic Policy Develpment Project produced the following lessons:

Effective parent involvement programs require——

Committed Leadership from the top. Half-hearted attempts will result in half-baked efforts. The school has to really want Hispanic parental involvement. If they do not, the parents will sense it.

Flexibility. Few Hispanic parents will respond to the outreach efforts that effectively recruit middle-class mainstream parents. Business as usual won't work. Schools have to adapt to the parents' needs, concerns and fears—not vice versa.

Sensitivity. Many Hispanic parents are uncomfortable in the presence of school personnel. Some are downright scared. The challenge for the schools is to get close enough to the parents to convey the message of how they and the parents can work together.

Most low-income Hispanic parents, for the diverse reasons described above, resist entering into close relationships with schools. Therefore, approaches to recruit Hispanic parents require time and flexible scheduling. Successful outreach efforts are built on——

- personal outreach.
- warm, non-judgmental communication.
- the ability to convey respect for the parents' feelings and needs.

OUTREACH

The experience of the forty-two HPDP programs showed that the single, and in most instances—**the only**—successful method of outreach is the home visit or the personal chat with the parent outside the school. Home visits can often be arranged during a personal chat outside the school, or parents can be informed about home visits when they register their children for school. Phoning is seldom a useful way to open relations. Parents may not have phones, and those that do, may not be comfortable speaking to strangers, particularly if the caller is not fluent in Spanish. Letters, particularly letters on school letterhead, are not effective. They frighten parents. Personal outreach is the key, and the message that will open the door is the one that says—**We want to talk to you about how we can work together to assure the success of your child in school. We need your help.** (Caution: Mothers are in charge of school matters, and they should be visited by females. A proper Hispanic woman does not receive a man in her home.)

The home visit not only projects the image of a friendly school that cares, it also helps the school better understand who their parents are. Do they speak English? Are they two-parent families? Does Mother work? Are the children in the care of grandparents? Is the neighborhood dangerous? etc. Rational parent programs can only be designed when schools know who the parents are. (Caution: It may take more than one visit to overcome parental reluctance to become involved in teaching.)

Don't send home letters on school letterhead. Many Hispanic parents will think it is bringing bad news.

Don't send letters at all if you can avoid it, but certainly never send an initial invitation that implies that the parents are deficient, such as, *Dear Mrs. Fulano: Why don't you come and learn how to be a good parent?*

THE FIRST MEETING

The first organized meeting must be a warm, comfortable, profitable experience for the parents. Otherwise the first meeting will be the last.

The meeting should be fun. Gaining the parents' confidence is a process. It takes time to overcome their suspicion, fear and reluctance. Make it a party. Don't talk at them. Don't load the meeting with content. Just tell them you are there to serve them and you hope you can all work together, because they and you are the teachers of their children. Then feed them and show them wonderful things the children have done. Or have the children perform.

Think seriously about *not holding the meeting in the school.* Find a place where the parents will be more comfortable. Look for someplace on their turf. One successful HPDP program took over the local McDonalds and fed the parents. The teachers and the principal donned McDonalds' uniforms and served. Another held Tupperware type parties in parents' homes and the school personnel went out into the neighborhood. Another made arrangements with the local laundromat. Still another held the meeting in the housing project's communal space. When there is an existing cadre of involved parents, they often can help plan the first meeting. Often, however, Hispanic parent involvement is nil, and schools must start from square one. (Caution: Involved parents who have assumed leadership positions in the school do not always welcome the influx of new parents who may threaten their control or position. Don't use them as your ambassadors if you are not sure that they want the other parents to be involved.)

Think imaginatively.
Consider the hour of the meeting carefully.
Consider the need for transportation.
Consider childcare.

THE NEXT MEETINGS

Find out what the parents want to discuss. Focus on their needs and their agenda. If schools respond to the parents' needs, they will respond to the school's.

Consult with them.
Seek their advice.
Make the partnership real.

Don't talk over their heads.
Don't ask questions that can have wrong answers.
Don't confuse lack of education with lack of intelligence.

Parents can be your best allies. Many fear that their lack of schooling means they can't help their children. It's your job to take the lead in showing them how much **you** need their help and how much their children need their help in home learning. Schools must show the parents that they value them.

Some of the kinds of activities undertaken by the HPDP projects that proved effective in keeping parents involved, overcoming their reluctance, and supporting home learning are:

Make & Take Workshops where parents learn how to make educational tools they can use at home—games, flashcards and activity boxes containing paper, crayons, scissors, etc.

Community Projects such as painting murals, cleaning up lots, planting gardens etc. When such activities include parents and teachers and administrator, they build spirit and a sense of community, and they allow parents to make contributions in a non-judgmental setting.

Parent Activity Corners in children's classrooms. Parents can sit in class with their children and listen to lessons. It helps parents to better understand what constitutes their children's school day and what it is that children are learning. As a consequence, they are better able to support learning at home.

Tutoring and Homework Centers where students receive assistance with homework and parents can attend workshops, ESL classes or parenting/homework—help classes.

Informal Small Workshops—initially on subjects parents identify—later on issues the schools find pressing.

Parents' Rooms—comfortably furnished with couches and chairs that can serve as resource centers where parents can borrow materials, and as places where parents can meet together, can confer with teachers, and can take classes and receive tutoring.

Cautions:

Don't treat the parents like students who are tall.

Don't push the parents immediately into the PTA if they are uncomfortable with that idea.

Don't imply that the parents have to change the way they are rearing their children. Tell them that they should consider building on their tradition by adding to it those practices that will better prepare their children for U.S. schools.

Don't assume that the parents have no knowledge or strengths to bring to the partnership.

Don't pressure the parents to speak English at home if that is not a family's dominate language. Parenting and the transmission of values require full command of language. What is taught in English can be taught in Spanish. In addition, fluency and literacy in two languages increases an individual's job options and expands intellectual horizons.

What Strengths Do Hispanic Parents Bring to the Partnership?

Hispanic families embody the following strengths that schools can build on to promote effective home learning. They are all values that schools value——

A respect for education and educators.

Parenting practices that promote cooperation, courtesy, and loyalty.

A strong emphasis on discipline and correct behavior.

A deep sense of dignity that requires that relationships be built on mutual respect.

Hispanic parents are an untapped resource for home learning and for general support of schools. Though it takes time and imagination and persistence to overcome the barriers that historically have separated schools and Hispanic parents, it is well worth the effort. The process of bringing Hispanic parents into partnership is a learning experience that produces significant and basic benefits for parents, children, and for school personnel as well.

Parents experience a sense of inclusion and achievement. They discover how important they are in their children's intellectual development. They acquire teaching skills. They feel wanted and needed.

Schools, on the other hand, gain first-hand knowledge about cross-cultural communication, they rediscover the fun of flexibility, and they experience the educator's ultimate satisfaction—

—children are learning;

—joy is put back in their days.

Everybody wins!

(This substance of this paper was drawn from the Hispanic Policy Development Project's handbook for school personnel entitled 'Together Is Better: Building Strong Partnerships Between Schools and Hispanic Parents'. 'Together' and two parents' guides—'Queridos Padres' in Spanish, and 'You're A Parent; You're A Teacher' in English, were published in1990. All three are distributed by the Hispanic Policy Development Project, 1001 Connecticut Avenue NW, Washington DC 20036.)

G-23

RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT REPORT

CENTER ON FAMILIES, COMMUNITIES, SCHOOLS & CHILDREN'S LEARNING May 1992, No. 3

The Puerto Rican Experience

Center researcher Nitza Hidalgo views the educational achievement of Puerto Rican children through a "socio-historical lens," examining Puerto Rico's historical relationship with the United States, the migration experience, family roles and values, acculturation processes, and pressure on the family structure in the United States.

While the Irish-American experience was based on assimilation, the Puerto Rican experience is based on an effort to adapt to a new culture while maintaining a sense of "PuertoRicanness," which denotes the maintenance of "a fundamental tie to a Puerto Rican cultural heritage," according to Hidalgo. Thus cultural factors that affect the educational achievement of Puerto Rican children, instead of disappearing in an assimilation that allows schools to continue business as usual, require that schools make changes to accommodate.

Historical Relationship

The United States took possession of Puerto Rico in 1898, and Puerto Ricans were given U.S. citizenship in 1917 (without being asked if they wanted it, Hidalgo notes). The current status of Puerto Rico as a free associated state, or commonwealth, was established in 1950, but that title obscures the ambiguous political status of the island. Puerto Ricans cannot vote in presidential elections and their one congressional representative also has no voting power. U.S. federal government agencies implement federal laws and federal assistance programs in Puerto Rico.

Hidalgo describes a one-sided United States-Puerto Rico relationship. "The hegemonic relationship is defined by the political subordination and control of Puerto Rico's future, the subordination of Puerto Rico's economic interests to those of the U.S., the creation of a captive market for U.S. products, and use of Puerto Rico as a source of raw material and cheap labor for U.S. business ventures." She notes that Puerto Ricans have been compared to Native Americans as a "trapped minority" whose land has been taken away from them.

Migration to the U.S.

The mass migration of Puerto Ricans to the United States began in the 1940s, primarily because of high unemployment and overpopulation of the island and needs for labor in the United States. Puerto Ricans, already U.S. citizens, were not immigrants, but migrants.

Between 1940 and 1950, over 180,000 migrated to the U.S.; another 370,000 migrated between 1950 and 1960. Most "migrated with their families; they were young, skilled, and literate in Spanish with an average of eight years of schooling." They entered low level factory, manufacturing and service occupations.

Hidalgo identifies three current categories of Puerto Rican migrants: the recently arrived migrants in search of employment, migrant workers moving back and forth between Puerto Rico and the U.S. as the work demands, and U.S.-born second, third, and fourth generation Puerto Ricans.

Although Puerto Rican migrants have experienced U.S. influence in their own country, Hidalgo notes that their encounter with North American culture is still jarring—they face "adjustment to a new language, unfamiliar personality traits and world views, the impersonal behavior of a highly bureaucratized society, a faster lifestyle in daily situations, and constant and sustained interactions with people from different ethnic groups."

Also, although Puerto Ricans include a range of racial types in their ethnic group, being descended from Taino Indians, Spanish, and Africans, they encounter discrimination and stereotyping because of the "rigid racial categorizations that exist in the U.S.," Hidalgo points out. Such discrimination, as with the Irish, became most pronounced once Puerto Ricans reached a critical mass in population in U.S. cities such as New York.

In the face of culture shock and discrimination, the Puerto Rican response has been similar to the Chinese-American response—to seek acculturation, not assimilation—to "establish themselves in the new society without disconnecting from their roots and identity." Connections to their Puerto Rican heritage, Hidalgo notes, are maintained by "yearly visits to relatives and extended families living in Puerto Rico, by living in ethnic neighborhoods where the culture is remade and reinforced, by the use of the Spanish language and the Spanish language media that keeps U.S. residents informed of news from Puerto Rico, and by a strong primary cultural identification as Puerto Ricans."

To assist the acculturation process, and in response to economic conditions that eliminated their initially good paying but low status factory jobs and left Puerto Rican median income at a little over half that of the total population, Puerto Ricans have organized into local community, city-wide, and national groups. These groups provide mutual assistance in seeking better economic conditions while supporting Puerto Rican family and cultural values.

Hidalgo notes that the main instrument of socialization and support for Puerto Ricans is the family, which in inner-city neighborhoods relies on "informal support networks when dealing with economic, health, social, or emotional problems." Later in this issue of the *Report* Center researcher Melvin Delgado examines how school-family-community partnerships might incorporate networks in promoting educational achievement of Puerto Rican children.

The Puerto Rican Family and Cultural Values

In her examination of the Chinese-American experience, Sau-Fong Siu cautioned strongly: "The typical Chinese-American family does not exist." Swap and Krasnow noted of the Irish: "... there is no single story to be told, but many stories." Hidalgo issues a similar caution about making generalizations about racial and ethnic groups: "What must be remembered is that there are as many variations and differences existing within a group as there are similarities."

She identifies a number of values that are practiced in a variety of forms. Puerto Rican culture values *respeto*—the general respect for one's own and others' human dignity and a more specific respect for others' authority and stature. The culture values personalism, an inner worth that is not based on material status but on fulfilling your personal role in life, doing what is expected.

Closely related to personalism is reciprocity, a closeness and caring for others that requires the "genuine expression of generosity," which is most significant and expected among family members and neighbors. Family obligation is deeply ingrained, Hidalgo notes, and family unity and interdependence are highly valued—close and frequent contact between family members is expected, as is "depending on the family for help in time of need...."

> *"... individual families support their children to achieve in school and to fulfill their responsibility as family members."*

Hidalgo notes that Puerto Rican families in the U.S. now range across five family types, from a nuclear family that can contain the mother, father, their children, the children of other unions, and the children of friends, to the traditional extended family that can contain grandparents, parents, and children, with frequent visitations from aunts and uncles. Puerto Rican family concepts include *compadrazgo* (co-parenthood) and *hijos de crianza* (informal adoption of children. Both practices bring friends and their children into close familial relations.

But the Puerto Rican extended family structure and values have been weakened by poverty, their migration and their adjustment to the norms in the U.S. The family's function as a social support network is endangered by these external conditions. For example, one study found that second generation Puerto Rican children in the U.S. were less respectful of the family and displayed less generosity toward others. And these children, although they were well aware of the value of retaining the Spanish language, were nonetheless losing it.

Puerto Rican School Achievement

Puerto Rican traditional values promote school achievement. Hidalgo states: "Children are taught to respect authority; they are taught to listen to teachers and to act in ways that ingratiate them to teachers. Puerto Rican families support their children's achievement by training them to be respectful of others, not to be *malcriado* [ill-bred]."

"The Puerto Rican community views education as essential for their improvement in this society," Hidalgo says, and "... individual families support their children to achieve in school and to fulfill their responsibility as family members. Since the individual perceives one's identity from within a system of family relationships, and family obligations promote inner self-worth, then fulfilling one's responsibilities in schools means fulfilling one's role in the family, doing what is expected of you."

But for many Puerto Rican children, community and family support does not yet translate into high educational achievement. Hidalgo cites the statistics: only 58 percent of Puerto Ricans have completed high school; in 1983, based on New York City data, only half of the Puerto Rican children were reading at or above grade level and just 54 percent were at or above grade level in mathematics.

Initial explanations for Puerto Rican children's lack of school achievement, as with many immigrant groups, focused on the cultural deficit model, which finds deficiencies in the student populations served by schools. This erroneous perspective posits that low achievement comes from home environments lacking "appropriate linguistic, cognitive and social stimulation. . . ." Thus the problem is seen to exist within the individual child and the family. This view, Hidalgo notes, allows the school to "justify maintenance of the status quo, for example, by adding a remediation program for students or creating a parenting skills class for community members."

Hidalgo notes that the cultural deficit model has exerted great influence on educational practice and social science research, but other interpretations are gaining ground. These include models of cultural conflict, teacher expectations, within-school structures, and resistance theory. Hidalgo concludes that while the other models explain particular aspects of the problem, only the resistance theory provides a comprehensive explanation.

Cultural conflict. Differences between the student's home culture and school culture are not a problem because they exist, but because they result in miscommunications and misinterpretations by teachers and students which, in turn, produce conflicts that lead to lower achievement by Puerto Rican children.

Teacher Expectations. Teachers (especially if they accept the cultural deficit model) may expect lower achievement from poor minority groups and reveal such expectations through their behaviors. "Given the primacy of interpersonal relationships within the Puerto Rican culture," Hidalgo notes, "the expectations of teachers, because they are seen as significant authority figures, would likely be important to students."

Within-School Structures. Students from low socioeconomic backgrounds and of different races may experience qualitatively different school experiences. Tracking and ability grouping are primary examples of structures that may expose poor and minority children to lower academic content and quality of instruction.

Resistance Theory. The routine practices and unexamined beliefs of schools reflect the dominant cultural system and, while not intending to, stigmatize children who have other cultural values. These thoughtless practices neglect these children's needs and demean their heritage. Poor and minority students may resist these assimilation practices through low school participation and achievement.

Resistance theory, according to Hidalgo, incorporates elements of other current theories and "helps us look at how low school achievement is a historically complex phenomenon. It looks outside the school—into the local community and the broader social order—as well as within school practices to identify the roots of failure and success."

Hidalgo concludes that the educational achievement of Puerto Rican children requires "schooling that grounds Puerto Rican students in the rich traditions of their culture," carried out through home and school partnerships which recognize Puerto Rican families as a strong support system, which support Puerto Rican families in culturally sensitive ways, which promote parents' learning about the requirements of school, and which also promote the training of teachers to understand the socialization and strengths of Puerto Rican families. ∎

Reprinted with permission.
For ordering of full report,
see end of "The Irish-American
Experience" article.

G-26

Center on Families,
Communities, Schools
& Children's Learning

REPORT

February 1992, No. 1

Current Research and Development

The Chinese–American Experience

Our reporting of the results of these studies begins with Sau-Fong Siu's literature review examining the Chinese-American experience and history in this country and the relationship of Chinese-American family and community behaviors, routines, values, and expectations to the educational achievement of Chinese-American children.

Siu's central premise is that some consistent cultural traditions and parenting values and practices promote and support the educational achievement of Chinese-American children. These factors, however, are only part of the story and are limited in their influence on educational achievement until and unless they interact with social and economic opportunity structures.

Culture, family structure, and parenting practices

The Chinese cultural values that are often cited to explain Chinese-Americans' success in school are usually those based on Confucianism and include respecting one's elders, a sense of family obligation, deferred gratification, hard work and discipline, and reverence for learning.

Valuing education is by no means a unique claim of Chinese-Americans, Siu notes—almost all immigrants recognize education as the way to a better life for their children. But Chinese-Americans tend "to define their cultural identity in terms of academic achievement."

After delivering an important reminder—*the typical Chinese-American family does not exist; the Chinese-American family is shaped by many forces*—Siu describes how Chinese cultural values generally translate into traditional Chinese parenting values and practices. In general, Chinese-American parents teach their children to value educational achievement above all other achievement, to respect authority, to feel a strong sense of responsibility for relatives, to blame oneself when failing to live up to parental expectations, and to learn self-control.

Research findings consistently show that Chinese-American parenting practices differ, on average, from those of other cultural groups in the United States, although the extent to which traditional values are adhered to in parenting practices varies according to the length of the family's stay in the United States and the degree of assimilation of the family into the dominant culture. Chinese parents, Siu summarizes, "tend to exercise more control over the members of the family, be more protective of children, emphasize more obedience to the parents, provide a higher proportion of enthusiastic positive feedback when teaching young children, value grades more than general cognitive achievement in children, evaluate more realistically a child's academic and personality characteristics, be less satisfied with a child's accomplishment, hold children to higher standards, and believe more in effort and less in innate ability than their American counterparts."

Much of the high educational achievement of current Chinese-Americans is due to immigration policies which favored more educated Chinese immigrants.

In general, Chinese-American values and parenting practices produce a strong congruence between the Chinese parent-child relationship and the schools' teacher-pupil relationship. This congruence, Siu notes, "results in (a) the Chinese-American child being viewed positively by the teacher and (b) the child's ability to devote nergy to learning rather than to coping with discontinuity and dissonance."

Values alone are not enough

As logical as it sounds that this scenario of congruence among cultural values, parenting values and practices, and American schools should produce high levels of Chinese-American educational achievement, Siu notes major gaps in this theory's explanatory power. For example, these factors can't explain the existence of the historically low levels of educational achievement of Chinese-Americans prior to World War II and similar low levels of the Chinese in general in China, Taiwan, and Hong Kong. "Obviously," Siu concludes, "the values in themselves are necessary but not sufficient conditions for success."

Another caveat about how limited the parenting values and practices and ltural traditions may be for explain-.g school achievement comes from the fact that high socioeconomic status correlates with high achievement for Chinese-Americans just as it does with the achievement of all other Americans. Much of the high educational achievement of current Chinese-Americans is due to immigration policies which favored more educated Chinese immigrants. Siu points out, "Given the initial advantage of Asian-American immigrants in terms of education and skills, their offspring's educational attainments are to be expected."

Siu notes that research has identified two distinct groups of Chinese-Americans—those who are "entrepreneurs and professionals, both American-born and new immigrants, living outside of Chinatowns, enjoying higher incomes and having more education than the national average... [and who] tend to come from Taiwan and Hong Kong" and those who are "manual and service workers, more recent immigrants, speak little or no English, lack a high school diploma from the homeland, and live in Chinatowns."

Children in the first group tend to show high educational attainment. For example, of the nine Chinese-American finalists in the 1987 Westinghouse Science Talent Search, five were born in Taiwan or had parents who were from Taiwan and six had parents whose jobs were based on high levels of education, such as research scientist, college professor, or physician. Chinese-American children in the second group, however, do much less well in school. For example, 1980 census data showed that 71.4 percent of Chinese-Americans living in New York City's Chinatown had no high school diploma.

Thus the success story of Chinese-American educational achievement in this country, according to Siu, cannot be attributed solely to shared cultural and family values and practices. There's another essential element—the historical interaction of those cultural and family values and practices with social factors. A full understanding of the educational achievement of Chinese-Americans in the United States, according to Siu, requires a full examination of the events and traditions of the Chinese homeland, which illuminates the roots of those cultural values and practices that are conducive to school success, and a full examination of the history of the Chinese community in the United States and its interactions with mainstream American society.

Four historical periods relevant

Siu shows how Chinese-American families and communities adapted and coped with barriers posed by American society through four historical periods: the pre-exclusion era (from the beginning of Chinese immigration up to about 1880), the exclusion era (from 1882 to 1943), the period from the repeal of the exclusion law in 1943 to the Immigration and Nationality Act Amendments of 1965, and the period since 1965. Through these periods, different types of Chinese-American identity emerged (sojourner, assimilator, accommodator, the ethnically proud, and the uprooted). These identities influenced how Chinese-Americans perceived education and social advancement.

During the first two periods, Chinese-Americans in general suffered "privation, prejudice, discrimination, and harsh treatment," Siu notes. Because access to education was severely limited, the traditional respect for education among the Chinese-Americans did not lead to educational achievement.

During the third period, "a series of events in the homeland as well as in the United States... led to a less hostile attitude toward Chinese-Americans and to a wider opening in the American opportunity structure." Throughout these historical periods, Siu notes, "it is significant that Chinese-Americans have basically accorded legitimacy to the American public school and persisted in the belief that education is the key to success."

At the beginning of the fourth period, from 1965 to the present, the United States suddenly discovered that it had a "model minority" in its midst. Public officials and the mass media began noticing and reporting the high educational levels and professional and technical occupational accomplishments of Asian-Americans. The prevailing message was that here is a disadvantaged minority group that "has pulled itself up by the bootstraps without any government intervention.... in a relatively short time."

This prevailing message, which conveniently ignored changes in immigration policies and patterns as well as changes in the labor market, led to a commonly-held but dangerous generality—here is a model group that other minority groups should look to for inspiration and insight about how to succeed in America.

This is not an appropriate conclusion, according to Siu, whose review clearly shows that the Chinese-American historical experience and family and community characteristics are unique among minority groups. In fact, Siu states, "What helped immigrant minorities such as Chinese-Americans to succeed is absent in the collective experience of involuntary minorities such as African-Americans: coming voluntarily as laborers instead of slaves, a view that problems are only temporary, a generally optimistic attitude, a belief that things are better in the United States, acceptance of the folk theory of the White middle class, a different but not oppositional social identity, a trust in White institutions, a situation in which culture and language do not have to be given up to succeed."

> *Motivation to learn, however, will vary among minority groups and even within minority groups depending on their socio-political experiences and value contexts.*

Siu identifies three issues on which the Chinese-American educational experience generates important questions about the education of all minorities: the importance of effort vs. innate ability for children's success in school, motivation to succeed in school, and types of parent involvement in the school.

The Chinese family culture emphasizes effort over innate ability as the key to educational achievement—an affirmation that, indeed, all children can learn. Motivation to learn, however, will vary among minority groups and even within minority groups depending on their socio-political experiences and value contexts. Finally, our common assumption is that active parent involvement in the school is vital to children's educational achievement, but the Chinese-American experience shows that parents do not have to be actively involved at the school building or participate in policy making in order to care deeply about their children's education and do a lot to encourage and monitor their children's progress at home.

Reference

Siu, Sau-Fong. "Toward an Understanding of Chinese-American Educational Achievement." Center on Families, Communities, Schools and Children's Learning, Report No. 2, 45 pages. ($5.40)

Reprinted with permission. For ordering of full report, see end of "The Irish-American Experience" article.

G-29

RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT REPORT

CENTER ON FAMILIES, COMMUNITIES, SCHOOLS & CHILDREN'S LEARNING May 1992, No. 2

The Irish-American Experience

Although Irish-Americans came from a white, Western European culture, they experienced "significant economic discrimination and anti-Catholic hostility" as immigrants in America, and suffered greatly from negative stereotyping. However, they have now been above the national average in educational achievement and occupational status for decades. Swap and Krasnow examine the basic questions: what historical and economic factors contributed to or hindered the Irish assimilation into the mainstream culture, and what family and community characteristics were important in promoting their children's educational achievement?

Oppression In Ireland

Tracing Irish history from an Irish Catholic perspective, Swap and Krasnow show how an initial cultural unity that merged Celtic influence, the Gaelic language, and Catholicism was suppressed by Norman invasion and control of Ireland beginning in the twelfth century. The invaders did not recognize Ireland as a center of culture and scholarship. Instead, a history of Ireland written by a Norman characterized the native Irish as barbarous, wild, and uncultivated, and this history influenced English views of the Irish for several hundred years. This theme—that a view of a people or an ethnicity is socially constructed and varies with historical periods and the purposes of the chroniclers—is important to understanding Irish and Irish-American history.

By the end of the seventeenth century, an English Protestant minority owned 95 percent of the country's property and had complete political power. Under the Penal Codes passed by the English parliament in 1691, no Irish Catholic could vote, serve on a jury, teach school, enter the University, or work for the government. Irish Catholics could not maintain schools or send their children abroad to be educated.

The prohibitions on education, the researchers note, reinforced a tradition of oral history begun by the Celts. Also, effectively blocked from social and economic mobility, "... the Irish turned inward, emphasizing service and conformity to family and community expectations." The family was the unit of production and survival. "Individuals' needs and preferences were subordinated to the maintenance of the family. . . ."

In the 1840s, the Great Potato Famine caused immense suffering in the Irish Catholic population. Pushed by English policies that showed disregard for the suffering and which encouraged emigration, hundreds of thousands of Irish who had few reserves or skills—landless peasants, seasonal workers, and unskilled urban workers—chose to emigrate to America. This choice, the researchers point out, was based on few options and was thus in essence involuntary.

Immigrants Enter Bottom Rung of Labor Market

The "famine" immigrants—about 1.5 million between 1840 and 1860—settled primarily in cities along the U.S. East Coast. They found work in factories and in the country's expanding communication and transportation systems, but "they were hired for unskilled labor, at the bottom of the economic ladder," in low-paying, dangerous jobs.

This confinement to the lower rungs of the labor market in urban areas, according to Swap and Krasnow, "gave apparent legitimacy to the notion that the Irish were willing to work cheap because they had no desire to improve their condition."

The negative stereotype of the Irish was also heavily influenced by the media and by anti-Catholicism. There was a desire among many in mid-nineteenth century America to achieve "a homogeneous society based on Anglo-Saxon, Protestant cultural values," Swap and Krasnow note. "Irish background, Catholicism, and urban corruption melded in the American mind to create a sense of threat to traditional American virtues and values."

The public schools reflected the social stereotyping of the larger society, the researchers note. They reflected the dominant Protestant culture and adhered to a "factory" model of schooling that automatically relegated children from poverty backgrounds to second-class status.

Denied access to education that valued their language, culture, and religion, the Irish were then attacked and stereotyped for their ignorance," the researchers say. "Denied access to skilled employment in America and to the acquisition of land and wealth in England, the Irish were berated for their poverty, filth, and violence. As the crowning irony .... these negative attitudes and actions toward the Irish were then justified based on the Irish worker's limited occupational mobility."

From Poverty to Respectability

The Irish in America have moved from the status of "an inferior, despised, and exploitable race to levels of academic and economic achievement among the highest in America."

In general, compared to succeeding immigrant groups, the Irish "were relatively advantaged by their stability, large numbers, language facility, and 'Western' background. White skin was also an advantage, as African-Americans became the primary targets of discrimination and racism. . . ." Also, improved conditions in the Republic of Ireland, the researchers note, decreased the stigma attached to Irish origins.

But many other factors—family, community, political, economic, educational, geographic—facilitated Irish-American progress between 1865 and 1925. Swap and Krasnow stress, "...there is no single story to be told, but many stories."

Geography. Life differed for the immigrant Irish according to where they settled. Boston, for example, provided few opportunities for anything other than unskilled labor and provided no access to integrated social organizations or business opportunities, which created a ghetto setting and an oppositional culture.

Philadelphia, however, was a rapidly expanding city that offered many options for skilled and unskilled work, fairly easy access to home ownership, and access to integrated social organizations.

And in the Far West, many Irish immigrants were prominent in the Nevada and California governments, amassed fortunes from the mines of Montana and California, and even set the social tone in cities such as San Francisco.

Alternative Schools. As early as 1829, the American Catholic leadership decided to establish parochial schools to help Irish Catholic children develop academically and maintain their faith. In 1884, the bishops insisted on a parochial school in every parish. At its peak, in the early twentieth century, about half of the Catholic children were receiving education in parochial schools. Historical records indicate that enrollment in parochial schools was more likely to lead to academic success for Irish children.

Local Politics. "The Irish used their large numbers to advantage" to gain control of local politics in major cities, according to Swap and Krasnow. The rich oral tradition of the Irish seemed to translate into skill in public speaking and persuasion; the Irish legacy of obligation to one's family and parish emerged in America as cohesiveness. These traits and customs served them well in gaining political power, which they then used "as a vehicle for correcting discrimination, expanding city services, and securing modest gains in upward mobility for their community."

As the Irish gained political and numerical power in cities, more Irish-American teachers were appointed to the public schools. The authors speculate that this increased families' comfort with the schools and enabled them to trust that the schools would support their children's success.

Voluntary Organizations. A broad range of voluntary organizations aided in the assimilation of the Irish immigrants who came during the famine years. These ethnic organizations, primarily founded and run by earlier immigrants who had achieved some measure of success, offered assistance in getting settled and provided opportunities for interaction and socialization.

Family Contributions to Children's Achievement

A potent indicator of the degree of Irish assimilation into the mainstream American culture is that during the past few decades, almost no research, including examining family connections between family practices and children's achievement, has separated Irish-Americans out as an ethnic group.

Based on the small amount of available research, supplemented by their own collection of oral histories from Irish-Americans of Catholic background and high academic achievement, Swap and Krasnow identify some common family characteristics that have implications for children's achievement. As in most such generalizations, there is wide variation among individual cases.

Perhaps the most prominent characteristic of the Irish family that retains traditional values related to educational achievement is the continuing emphasis on hard work and doing well in school. However, the authors also discovered that some families may resist individual achievement that elevates one member of the family above others or threatens family cohesion.

Suggestions Concerning Educational Achievement

Swap and Krasnow provide a series of suggestions about how families, communities, and schools might support the educational achievement of Irish-American children. Their research suggests that the use of oral histories would be motivational, and that "poetry, drama, reading, the written and the spoken word are all fertile avenues of emotional connection and learning for the Irish."

Other implications for improving educational achievement include guidance in avoiding the labeling of Irish children within their families, extending aspects of Catholic schooling that were so effective for Irish children into the public sector (especially the "family and school expectations and connections that could signal shared commitment to the child's learning"), and questioning family and community restrictions on motivation and individual achievement.

Finally, the authors reiterate that the meaning of ethnicity is socially constructed and shaped by time and place, economic opportunity, and relationships of power: "Although status seems immutable from our particular vantage point in time and geography, our tracing of the acceptance provided to the Irish and Irish-Americans suggest that it is not. We have the power to construct positive images of children of varying ethnicities in our classrooms and schools."

Reprinted with permission.

CENTER ON FAMILIES, COMMUNITIES, SCHOOLS AND CHILDREN'S LEARNING

References and Reports

Full reports of each study may be ordered at the prices indicated from the Dissemination Office, Center on Families, Communities, Schools and Children's Learning, The Johns Hopkins University, 3505 North Charles Street, Baltimore, MD 21218.

Nettles, Saundra Murray. "Coaching in Community Settings: A Review." Report No. 9, April 1992 ($3.60).

Swap, Susan McAllister and Jean Krasnow. "A Saga of Irish-American Achievement: Constructing a Positive Identity." Report No. 11, May 1992 ($7.40).

Hidalgo, Nitza. "'i saw puerto rico once:' A Review of the Literature on Puerto Rican Families and School Achievement in the United States." Report No. 12, May 1992 ($6.20).

Delgado, Melvin. "The Puerto Rican Community and Natural Support Systems: Implications for the Education of Children." Report No. 10, Apr. 1992 ($3.60).

Palanki, Ameetha and Patricia Burch (with Don Davies). "Mapping the Policy Landscape: What Federal and State Governments Are Doing to Promote Family-School-Community Partnerships." Report No. 7, March 1992 ($9.40).

Epstein, Joyce L. "School and Family Partnerships." Report No. 6, March 1992 ($3.50). (Also published in the new AERA *Encyclopedia of Educational Research*, Vol. 6, 1992, pp. 1139-1151.)

Epstein, Joyce L., Lori J. Connors, and Karen Clark Salinas (with educators from the Baltimore City Public Schools, Baltimore County Public Schools, and Harford County Public Schools). "Surveys of School and Family Partnerships: Questionnaires for Teachers, Parents, and Students." 1992 ($6.00).

Scott-Jones, Diane. "Educational Levels of Adolescent Childbearers at First and Second Births." *American Journal of Education*, August 1991, pp. 461-480.

Reports available from the first issue of this Report:

Davies, Don, Patricia Burch and Vivian Johnson. "A Portrait of Schools Reaching Out: Report of a Survey on Practices and Policies of Family-Community-School Collaboration." Report No. 1, February 1992 ($12.50).

Siu, Sau-Fong. "Toward an Understanding of Chinese-American Educational Achievement." Report No. 2, February 1992 ($5.40).

Young, Kathryn T. and Elisabeth Marx. "What Does Learning Mean for Infants and Toddlers? The Contributions of the Child, the Family, and the Community." Report No. 3, March 1992 ($4.80).

Kagan, Sharon L., Joan Costley, Linda Landesman, Fern Marx, Peter Neville, Susan Parker and Jean Rustici. "Family Education and Training: Obstacles, Opportunities, and Outcomes for Low-Income Mothers." Report No. 4, March 1992 ($17.00).

Salganik, Laura H. and Rebecca L. Carver. "Strategies for Informing Families About School Choice." Report No. 5, March 1992 ($3.60).

Epstein, Joyce L., Vivian E. Jackson, Karen Clark Salinas, and Baltimore City middle grades language arts and science teachers. "TIPS Manual for Teachers: Interactive Homework in Language Arts and Science/Health in the Middle Grades." 1992 ($6.00).

TIPS Prototype Materials available at $8.00 each:

- Language arts, grade 6.
- Science/health, grade 6.
- Language arts, grade 7.
- Science/health, grade 7.

BLACK AMERICANS

To be Black in America is always to be different. It is to have 350 years of history as Americans and still be strangers here. It is, as W.E.B. Du Bois wrote, ". . . a peculiar sensation, this double-consciousness, this sense of always looking at one's self through the eyes of others."

Blacks are the largest minority group in the United States: 28.9 million in 1985, about 12 percent of the total population. While the nation commonly groups together all peoples of African descent under the rubric "Black Americans," or "African-Americans," they are in fact drawn from a diverse range of cultures and countries in Africa, and later from the Caribbean and from Central and South America.

While the changing economic structure of the post-World War II era sent millions of Black Americans northward, half of all Blacks still reside in the South. Black Americans have become an urban people as well: seventy-seven percent live in urban areas.

SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC CONDITIONS

Despite the abolition of most legal forms of discrimination, the continued shadow of racism remains. Sixty percent of all Blacks find that racism intrudes upon their daily lives and a recent survey showed that 79 percent believe that racial attacks, such as those in Bensonhurst and Howard Beach in New York City, could happen to them. Attacks at NAACP offices, racial unrest on college campuses, the election of a former Klan official to the state legislature in Louisiana, the growing number of racial crimes and assaults documented by the Southern Poverty Law Center and others—all are evidence that racism survived the Civil Rights movement and threatens to renew its attack.

Overall, poverty rates for Blacks are the highest of any group in America: 31.6 percent in 1988, nearly two and a half times the national average of 13.1 percent. That means there were 9.43 million Black Americans were living in poverty that year. The rates for Black children were even higher: 42.2 percent, more than twice the poverty rate for all American children.

Black unemployment rates continue to soar above those for Whites. In 1989, when the unemployment level was about 5.3 percent nationally, Black unemployment was more than twice that level at 11.8 percent. The unemployment rate for Black teenagers was far higher: 34.2 percent, and even those Black youngsters who earned a high school diploma found themselves less likely to be employed than White high school dropouts.

Black family income dropped from 59.2 percent of White family income in 1978 to 56.1 percent in 1987. For the poorest fifth of Black families, real income dropped 24 percent between 1978 and 1987. For Black high school graduates, incomes fell 40 percent in constant dollars between 1973 and 1987, compared to a 9 percent fall for Whites; incomes of Black college graduates increased in constant dollars in that period, but only by about 3 percent compared to 12 percent for Whites.

(Reprinted with permission from Education That Works: An Action Plan for the Education of Minorities. Quality Education for Minorities Project, MIT, 1990)

As a result of the growing gap between the Black poor and affluent, some Black families have left the inner cities for areas where more decent housing and better school systems are available. Those families remaining are increasingly poor, single-parent households with limited prospects for employment and little hope for access to quality education.

The impact of these economic changes on low-income Black males has been especially devastating. A decline in manufacturing and low-skilled jobs, a drop in real mean wages for young Black men, and the continued undereducation of Blacks combine to deny for many Black males the realistic opportunity to help support a family on their incomes. For example, in 1973, more than half (55 percent) of Black males had sufficient earnings to help support a family of three above the poverty line. By 1984, just 23 percent, one in four, had such earnings. The impact of drugs, AIDS, Black-on-Black homicide, and accidents have sent death rates soaring for Black men between the ages of 15 and 44. A Black man has one chance in 21 of being murdered before he is 25. Black men who survive are more likely to go to prison than White men. Although only 6 percent of the total population, Black males make up nearly 46 percent of the prison population.

Fundamental indicators of the quality of life are infant mortality and life span. In 1986, the Black infant mortality rate was more than twice that of Whites. Even more disturbing is that for the first time in this century, life expectancies of Blacks have fallen for two consecutive years.

EDUCATIONAL TRENDS

Compared to the educational attainment of Black Americans before 1960, the gains of the last twenty years are impressive. In 1960, the average Black adult had an 8th grade education; by 1986, the average Black adult had a high school diploma. Black students overall have made truly encouraging gains in the dropout rate, measured at about a 15 percent rate in 1988, and test scores in recent years show some narrowing of the gap between Black and White student achievement.

The major problem facing Black students is that the schools they attend are often separate, and typically unequal. In 1968, 77 percent of all Black students attended predominantly (more than 50 percent) minority schools, while 64 percent attended intensely segregated schools with fewer than 10 percent White students. By 1980, the figures had dropped to 63.5 percent in predominantly minority schools and 33.2 percent in intensely segregated schools. But progress towards full desegregation was halted at that point, and measures of segregation showed virtually no improvement through 1986.

Black students face discrimination within schools as well, making up 16 percent of the student population, but 31 percent of all corporal punishment cases, 25 percent of all student suspensions, 35 percent of those categorized as educable mentally retarded, and just 8 percent of those in gifted and talented programs.

While Blacks have made gains in high school graduation rates and college admissions tests, the number of those high school graduates actually going on to college has declined in the 1980s. With the growth in overall college enrollment, the share of college students who are Black fell from 9.4 percent to 8.6 percent.

A successful approach to improving education for Black Americans must recognize the impact of the economic, social, and educational trends described above, and be part of a larger effort to overturn them. The educational system must address not only the racism within it that holds Black youth back, but also the impact of poverty outside the school walls that can so deeply scar the educational experience.

Adapted and Reprinted with Permission from: Cultural Backgrounds and Educational Issues: A Guide on Asian & Pacific Islander American Students by John Nobuya Tsuchida. Washington D.C.: National Education Association, 1991

6-34

CHAPTER SIX

SOUTHEAST ASIANS

1. Demographic Information

For the purpose of this book, the term "Southeast Asians" refers to the natives of Vietnam, Cambodia (now called Kampuchea), and Laos, as well as their descendants in the United States. For the sake of consistency and clarity, "Cambodia" and "Cambodians" will be used in lieu of "Kampuchea" and "Kampucheans." Laotians, that is, the citizens of Laos, consist of two major ethnic groups: (1) Lao residing mainly in the lowlands, and (2) Hmong residing in the highlands. Although the Hmong may be further divided into several different tribal and linguistic subgroups, the term "Hmong" will be used to include all the highlanders of Laos.

As of 1990, there resided in this country 1,001,054 Southeast Asians. The Southeast Asian population was composed of the following four subgroups:[1]

1. Vietnamese	614,547	(61.4%)
2. Lao	149,014	(14.9%)
3. Cambodian	147,411	(14.7%)
4. Hmong	90,082	(9.0%)
Total	1,001,054	(100.0%)

The Vietnamese were by far the largest refugee group accounting for 61.4 percent of the Southeast Asian population. The Lao were a distant second, comprising only 14.9 percent of the total.

The federal government had initially made concerted efforts to disperse the entering Southeast Asian refugees across the country[2] to minimize the occurrence of racial incidents, as well as to make each state's contributions proportionate to its demographic size and financial resources. By 1990, however, over a half of the Southeast Asian population had gravitated to the western states. The western region accounted for 58 percent of Cambodians, 55 percent of Hmong, 54 percent of Vietnamese and 51 percent of Lao. More than 41 percent of the Hmong lived in the Midwest, particularly in Minnesota, whereas California alone had attracted 46 percent of all Vietnamese in the United States.[3] ······

---

[1] U.S. Bureau of the Census, *United States Department of Commerce News* (June 12, 1991), Table 3A. Race and Hispanic Origin for the United States and Regions: 1990.

[2] Tricia Knoll, *Becoming Americans: Asian Sojourners, Immigrants, and Refugees in the Western United States* (Portland: Coast to Coast Books, 1982), p. 152.

[3] Bureau of the Census, *United States Department of Commerce News*, Table 3C. Race and Hispanic Origin for the United States and Regions: 1990; and Table 5B. Asian or Pacific Islander Persons by Group for the United States and States.

Between 1975 and 1979, a total of 292,315 Vietnamese refugees are known to have arrived by boat in countries of first asylum, such as Thailand, Malaysia, Singapore, Indonesia, Hong Kong, and the Philippines. It is estimated that 10 to 15 percent of the boat people perished at sea.[23] In addition to numerous shipwrecks and deaths caused by illness and starvation aboard the ships, roughly 30 percent of refugee vessels which had set sail from Southern Vietnam were attacked by pirates at sea. The pirates committed "rape, pillage and murder (RPM)"[24] against hapless and defenseless refugees. Many of the victims of "RPM" later suffered from severe psychological problems.[25] By the end of 1987, the United States admitted 417,492 Vietnamese.[26]

3. Current Socioeconomic Status

The Southeast Asian population in the United States increased dramatically in the 1980s due to a large-scale immigration of refugees from Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia, many of whom came by way of the countries of first asylum. Consequently, the 1980 census data based on a much smaller number of Southeast Asian respondents no doubt fail to accurately illustrate the current socioeconomic status of Southeast Asians. In the absence of the socioecomonic data from the 1990 census, however, we still have to rely on the 1980 statistics.

Collectively speaking, Southeast Asians have substantially less formal education than the other Asian American groups. As of 1980, 62 percent of Vietnamese 25 years old and over had a high school education, compared to 43 percent for Cambodians, 31 percent for Lao, and 22 percent for Hmong. The four Southeast Asian groups all had considerably lower high school graduation rates than the total Asian and Pacific Islander American (APIA) population in the same age bracket, whose high school completion rate averaged 75 percent. In every refugee group, men were far more likely than women to have high school diplomas. The male-female difference in the high school graduation rate ranged from 11 percentage points for the Hmong to 18 percentage points for the Cambodians.[27] In Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos, women generally had limited opportunities to pursue formal education.······

4. Educational Issues

Of all the Asian American children, Southeast Asian students probably are the most disadvantaged in their efforts to acquire an American education. There are certain unfavorable factors associated with their refugee backgrounds. First, unlike immigrants who usually come to the United States quite well prepared psychologically, educationally, and vocationally, Southeast Asian refugees normally arrive in their host country without much psychological, professional, or economic preparation, and under chaotic circumstances at that. Whereas the immigrants make conscious decisions to move to their adopted country, the refugees often go, without much personal property, to whichever country offers them asylum. Furthermore, refugees do not have the luxury of making adequate preparations before resettling in a new country. While Immigration denotes planned and desired transplantation, the exodus of refugees implies a sudden, chaotic, and expedient move to their host country. Unprepared and undesired entry into the asylum country will naturally put refugee children at a great disadvantage in their quest for an American education.

---

[23] *Ibid.*, pp. 80-81.

[24] *Ibid.*, p. 63, 65.

[25] *Ibid.*, p. 77.

[26] Immigration and Naturalization Service, *1987 Statistical Yearbook...*, pp. 3-4.

[27] Bureau of the Census, *We, the Asian and Pacific...*, p. 12.

Second, because many refugees have large extended families, it is often difficult for them to secure adequate housing at affordable prices.[33] As a result, multimember families, especially from Laos and Cambodia, live in crowded houses and apartments. Such a strained housing situation is by no means conducive to creating a productive educational environment at home. Devoid of such basic things as desks and chairs, many Southeast Asian children find it hard to concentrate on their homework in noisy, crowded houses. Furthermore some of the familial obligations and household chores--taking care of smaller siblings, and handling cooking, laundry, cleaning, and interpreting for their non-English-speaking relatives--sometimes keep them from devoting sufficient time and attention to their class assignments.

Third, large numbers of Southeast Asian parents, particularly fathers, have quickly lost their traditional position of authority at home. With little or no English proficiency or marketable skills, adult males were no longer able to perform their duties as their families' breadwinners. Dysfunctional in the highly technological host society, many male heads of Southeast Asian households became depressed over their helplessness and bleak future. A substantial but undetermined amount of marital problems ensued, resulting in some instances in domestic abuse, chemical dependency, suicide, and divorce. Such pains of resettlement in an alien culture naturally have affected not only the spousal relationship based on the patriarchal system, but also traditional parenting grounded upon filial piety.[34] Moreover, some refugee students who quickly developed better English skills than their parents began to show less deference to them on account of their inability to help with their children's homework, as well as of the parents' increasing dependence on their children to survive in the host country.

Fourth and last, Southeast Asian students do need effective bilingual or English as a Second Language (ESL) programs, depending on the pupils' grades, subject areas, and overall preparedness for integration into the American educational mainstream. However, such English programs should be language-specific, if at all possible, for the four major refugee groups represent different cultural backgrounds and needs. Generally speaking, Vietnamese children demonstrate the strongest academic prowess and adaptability of all the Southeast Asian groups. Although many Vietnamese students do well in science and mathematics, their English skills have much to be desired, particularly in reading and writing. Their verbal skills may belie their inability to read textbooks fast enough and to fully comprehend the contents due to their limited vocabulary and unfamiliarity with the concepts and subtle cultural nuances behind the words they are reading. In terms of writing skills, they need to improve their grammar, punctuation, and syntax.[35]

Hmong students present a much greater challenge to American teachers. They were abruptly transplanted from a preindustrial, preliterate society to a highly technological and industrialized consumer society. Few of the Hmong students' parents received formal education beyond elementary school in Laos. Lao students, on the other hand, generally come from stronger academic backgrounds in terms of their parents' educational attainment. However, the long interruption of the Lao children's education, due to their prolonged stay in Thai refugee camps, makes it extremely difficult for American teachers to place the pupils in appropriate courses and grades.

Finally, Cambodian children, the survivors of the genocide, need to overcome the effects of loss of their loved ones and of intellectuals in the Cambodian community who could have facilitated the students' integration into the educational mainstream of American society.

---

[31] *Ibid.*, p. 13.

[32] *Ibid.*

[33] Vuong G. Thuy, "The Indochinese in America: Who Are They and How Are They Doing?", in Don T. Nakanishi and Marsha Hirano-Nakanishi (eds.), *The Education of Asian and Pacific Americans: Historical Perspectives and Prescriptions for the Future* (Phoenix: Oryx Press, 1983), p. 109.

[34] *Ibid.*, pp. 109-111.

[35] These findings were derived from the author's teaching experience at the University of Minnesota and from the results of the Minnesota Battery of English Language Proficiency Tests and the Michigan English Language Assessment Battery, which thousands of Southeast Asian students had taken at the University of Minneosta for admission and placement purposes.

Reaching Out to Culturally Diverse Families

Susan M. Swap
Wheelock College, Boston, MA
December, 1991

Introduction

Increasing Diversity

Racial, language, and ethnic diversity are increasingly common in America's classrooms. By the Year 2000, the Census Bureau projects that the total number of children of color will have increased 25.5% from 1985 levels. Immigration figures are soaring. We are experiencing the highest immigration levels since the 1920's. According to preliminary data from the 1990 census, immigrants now account for 30% of the nation's population growth, up from 19% in 1980 (Boston Globe, 9/20/90, pp. 1 and 18). Moreover, there is a shift in immigration patterns from European lands of origin, with more families now arriving from Mexico, Asia, Central and South America, and the Carribean (First and Carerra, 1988). In one school I visited in California, children spoke 31 different primary languages; in another, families from several countries put on headsets at a PTA meeting to hear simultaneous translations of the speaker's remarks.

Although the children in our schools are from increasingly diverse backgrounds, teachers are not. Only 11% of our teachers are people of color, and the numbers of African-Americans, Hispanics, and native Americans in teacher preparation institutions are actually decreasing (Hawley, 1989). And whether teachers are from mainstream or non-mainstream backgrounds, all encounter children and families whose backgrounds are different from their own. The need to learn more about families who are from racial or language backgrounds that are different from our own is compelling. Moreover, expanding the learning process by exploring the cultural roots of our own attitudes and values can also lead to important insights about teaching and learning.

Implications

Establishing good connections with children and families from diverse backgrounds poses challenges for teachers. There are the obvious challenges posed by children (or parents) who can not communicate with the teacher in English or who have suffered unresolved trauma in their country or culture. There are also less obvious challenges posed by children and families from immigrant backgrounds who may be fluent in English or who are from involuntary minority cultures; that is, "minorities who were initially brought into the United States society against their will, through slavery or conquest" of indigenous peoples (Ogbu's distinction, 1990, p. 63). Without careful investigation, educators may assume that:

- families share teachers' convictions about the most effective ways for children to learn at home and school;
- styles of non-verbal communication have common meanings;
- children (and families) from the same racial or cultural background will process experiences and respond in similar ways;
- words spoken in English - even when the vocabulary is understood - convey identical meanings.

To illustrate these issues, I will offer just two brief examples. Regarding non-verbal communication, it is fairly well known that avoidance of eye contact is a signal of respect (rather than disrespect) in Asian, Hispanic, and many native American cultures. When communicating with various minority culture groups, it is less well known that the common pattern of white middle class speech in which directives are expressed as questions ("Is that where the scissors belong?" "Is that how we treat our friends?") can be confusing and unfamiliar to children from communities where adult authority is expressed directly ("Put the scissors away." "You stop that hitting now!"). (See Delpit, 1988; Heath, 1983, and Nelson-Barber and Meier, 1990 for an extended discussion of differences in expectations, linguistic styles, and teaching styles that emerge when children and teachers are from different cultural backgrounds.)

A lack of synchrony between the cultures of the child and teacher can impede children's learning in several ways. First, children from non-mainstream backgrounds have a double curriculum to learn: the overt academic content, and the rules of learning and participating which are seldom recognized or explicitly taught. Second, when children and teachers consistently misunderstand each other's responses - but do not realize the source of that misunderstanding - mistrust of the teacher by the child and lowered expectations of the child's capability on the part of the teacher are a frequent result. Because children usually cannot articulate the source of their uneasiness, it is especially important for teachers to learn about cultural differences. Third, when the history, perspectives, and achievements that are part of a child's background are consistently omitted from the texts and contexts of the classroom, a sense of continuity in learning between home and school and the conviction that one's identity is valued in school can be lost.

A lack of synchrony between the teacher and family members may generate misunderstanding and blame on both sides, impede the child's learning, and limit (or eliminate) productive connections between home and school.

The Task

For teachers and administrators, learning about the varied cultural backgrounds of students and their families is not a simple matter. The process of discovery that could increase educators' responsiveness to children and families from varied backgrounds is intellectually challenging and enriching, but it is also time-consuming. There are often few mentors in schools who can help: adequate preservice or inservice programs on multicultural teaching and learning have been rare, and as mentioned above, there are few "minority" faculty in most schools whose expertise could be tapped. Another issue that is both a problem and an opportunity is that the task of learning about cultures different from one's own is continuous: It would be impossible to be fully versed in the range of cultures from which pupils may come. It is also very possible that a given classroom might contain several children whose backgrounds were unfamiliar to the teacher, each requiring research and reaching out to families within a given year. Finally, though it is more productive, efficient, and fun for faculty and administrators to collaborate with each other and with parents in this process of discovery, formal and informal school policies and structures which are unsupportive of adult collaboration may impede joint work.

Despite these constraints, the educators' task of teaching **all** the children is both noble and essential; strategies for reaching out to **each** family to support children's learning **have** been developed; and the benefits of doing both have been documented again and again (see, e.g., Comer, 1988; Henderson, 1987; Moses, Kamii, Swap, and Howard, 1989; Okakok, 1989).

Strategies for Gathering Information

Gathering Background Knowledge

Learning more about the history, literature, art, political experience, and values of a culture or people that is unfamiliar to you is like peeling an onion. Something is gained from each layer, but it seems that there is always more to learn. Initial strategies might include looking up a country or ethnic group in the encyclopedia (see especially the Harvard Encyclopedia of American Ethnic Groups), exploring resources in the local library, connecting with colleagues with expertise from a local college or university, reading literature of a particular author or period, attending a concert featuring music from that culture. In my experience, these initial strategies alert one to the richness and complexity of the culture and heighten one's appreciation of the contributions of that culture and what more one could learn.

Learning about Previous Educational History

For teachers, information about a culture's orientation to education - in the land of origin and in America and over time - is a particularly useful resource. There are many volumes on the experiences of voluntary and involuntary immigrant groups in America that include data and interpretations about educational values and achievement; very useful anthropological studies about family attitudes toward education; and useful books from the professions of counseling and psychology about working with families from varied backgrounds.

Learning about Families' Educational Values and Priorities

The single most important resource for learning about the educational values and traditions of parents of children in one's classroom is, of course, the parents themselves. If there has not been a history of involvement with these particular parents or more broadly, with parents from this cultural group, it is necessary to assess the reasons for lack of involvement and develop strategies that address them.

Some of the factors that may impede easy connections include language differences, physical distance of families from school, lack of clarity from the parents' perspective about what school personnel want and think is important; parents' limited or quite different educational experiences; issues of survival (e.g., long working hours or poverty) that make parental availability difficult; lack of literacy in English and/or in the primary language; cultural or class norms about the appropriate role of parents in schooling that do not stress involvement; transient status, and illegal status as immigrants.

For immigrant families, especially when there are language barriers, drawing upon resources from the family's community may be helpful in establishing initial ties, providing information about organizations and agencies of importance in the community, or identifying individuals who could act as interpreters or speakers for parent meetings or staff training. Moreover, involving the cultural community sends a positive message about the school's interest in two-way communication with families. Expanding on a list developed by Siu (1990), some potential sources are:

1. The sponsor of a refugee parent; a petitioner (relative) of a legal immigrant parent; refugee resettlement groups;
2. Other parents in the program who are from the same home country;
3. A preschool program in your area known for serving multicultural families;
4. The International Students office of your local college/university;

5. Foreign language department or social work/human service departments of your local college/university;
6. Ethnic places of worship or ethnic business establishments;
7. Language schools run by various ethnic groups;
8. National organizations advocating for refugees or immigrants;
9. Folk festivals or local ethnic museums.

Several of these sources of expertise may also be helpful in connecting to cultural groups who have been a part of United States history for extended periods of time.

Reaching Out to Families

Listed below are additional tips for reaching out and establishing connections between teachers and families when they are from different backgrounds:

1. **Meet with families in their communities.** Sometimes a very useful way of establishing connections is to meet face to face in the family's community, perhaps in a church, a local restaurant, a housing complex, or in the family's home before any problems arise. (In deciding whether to ask to meet in a family's home, it is useful to realize that in some cultures such outreach is welcomed and even expected; in others, the home is considered a private space.)

2. **Plan informal opportunities for contact and building trust.** When trying to reach out to families who have not established regular connections to the school, informal opportunities to socialize (particularly with good food) can be indispensable. Particularly for parents from many Asian and Southeast Asian cultures, resolving problems and reaching consensus about difficult decisions is almost impossible without some previously established trust. Frequent brief notes home with an emphasis on children's accomplishments can also be useful.

3. **Identify a liaison person.** Schools profit from Identifying a person(s) from the school who has responsibility for reaching out to parents, coordinating programs and outreach efforts, helping teachers identify resources and strategies, and helping parents feel that there is someone "for them" connected to the schools. Whether formal or informal, volunteer or paid, some examples include a parent or teacher identified as a parent coordinator or parent liaison; a member of the bilingual, guidance, or Title I staff for whom parent outreach is part of their job description; a parent center coordinator; or members of the community who are hired or volunteer to work with parents at home.

4. **Ask parents about their needs, interests, and priorities.** One of the best ways to test our assumptions about families' hopes for the school and goals for the children is to ask them. This may be accomplished through individual or small-group interviews (face-to-face or telephone) or through short questionnaires. Because comfort in responding through questionnaires, telephone, or personal contact is also linked to culture, community informants might provide helpful information about the most effective strategies for gathering information. Many articles and books provide sample questionnaire formats (e.g. Blakely, 1983; Saville-Torke, 1978; Swap, 1987).

Just as with teachers, not all types of home-school activities are equally interesting or comfortable for families. Different activities may be more congenial for particular cultural groups, and especially when trying to establish connections with families that have not been involved, especially tailored activities are appropriate. Whether parents become involved by making or collecting things at home for classroom projects, contributing to a school clean-up effort, volunteering in the classroom, listening to their child read at home, coming to a performance, or sitting on an advisory board is not important. What is important is conveying how crucial partnership is and how valued each contribution is to the school and the children.

5. **Base programs on parent and educator priorities and needs.** Once information is available from parents and educators about their interests, priorities, and constraints, plan programs and activities accordingly. For example, making transportation, translators, and child care available to families may be important ingredients for encouraging family participation at an event based at the school. Having a plan that extends over a year or two may help to expend scare resources wisely and meet important needs without organizers becoming burned out or efforts becoming fragmented.

6. **Develop clear guidelines about how parents can support their children's learning.** Parents generally indicate a strong interest in supporting their children's learning but say they don't know how to be productively involved (Epstein, 1987). Ideally, decisions about how parents can support their children's learning at home and at school will be developed through two-way communication. Learning activities at home should reinforce mutual goals about children's development. If goals and directions are clear, if school personnel establish the importance of the collaboration, and if the involvement requested of parents is congruent with their educational backgrounds and time constraints, then research shows that parent participation rates are high and productive (Walberg, Bole, and Waxman, 1980; Swap, 1990)

6-43

7. **Offer options for parent education and support.** Parents may benefit from participating in ESL classes, in hobby groups, in parent education activities, in a clothing exchange. Providing resources for parents or at least clarifying how parents can get access to existing resources in the community can be very important contributions to children and their families.

8. **Develop theme-based curriculum units that draw upon cultures that you are learning more about.** Many teachers have modeled a process of inquiry for children by incorporating the in-depth study of cultures into the class curriculum. A theme such as family patterns, scientific discoveries, or musical forms could draw on the resources of parents and other members of the cultural community while extending one's own learning and the learning of the children. This strategy is much preferred over the more common one that consists of devoting a day's study to a culture where foods and artifacts are superficially encountered (see Ramsey, 1987).

9. **Collaborate with colleagues.** Becoming responsive to children and families from many cultures is a complex and ongoing task. The task becomes more manageable, more fun, and more richly articulated when teachers and administrators identify and work on the challenge together. The opportunity to share the responsibilities and fruits of discovery, to create a sequenced curriculum, and to develop systematic policies and practices for reaching out to families is only possible when the faculty plan together. Adding representatives from the community to the planning team is also beneficial.

10. **Explore your own cultural values and assumptions.** Focusing on children and families from diverse cultures is not enough: paradoxically, much of the exploration of cultural diversity must begin with oneself. For me and my colleagues at Wheelock who are engaged in this odyssey, the exploration of our own cultural heritages has been full of surprises, unanticipated confirmations, and new learnings. We have realized how much we do not know about our own cultural history and the history of our colleagues. As we search, we have learned that our individual and joint explorations demand a certain level of comfort with ambiguity, a willingness to risk mistakes, and a commitment to identifying and learning new skills in reaching out to others. We have also realized that the questions we initially raised about ourselves have become useful prototypes for continuing to learn about children and families from diverse cultures.

G-44

References

Blakely, M. (1983). Southeast Asian refugee parents: an inquiry into home-school communication and understanding. Anthropology and Education Quarterly, 14, 43-68.

Comer, J. (1988). Educating poor minority children. Scientific American, 259, 5, 42-48.

Delpit, L. (1988). The silenced dialogue: Power and pedagogy in educating other people's children. Harvard Educational Review, 58, 3, 280-298.

Epstein, J. (1987). Parent involvement: what research says to administrators. Education and Urban Society, 19, 2, 119-136.

First, J. and Carrera, J. (1988). New voices: Immigrant students in U.S. public schools. Boston, MA: National Coalition of Advocates for Students.

Hawley, W. (1989). The importance of minority teachers to the racial and ethnic integration of American society. Equity and Choice, 5, 2, 31-36.

Heath, S. (1983). Ways with words. Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press.

Henderson, A. (1987). The evidence continues to grow: Parent involvement improves student achievement. Columbia, MD: National Committee for Citizens in Education.

Moses, R., Kamii, M., Swap, S., and Howard, J. (1989). The Algebra Project: Organizing in the spirit of Ella. Harvard Educational Review, 59, 4, 423-443.

Nelson-Barber, S., and Meier, T. (1990). Multicultural context a key factor in teaching. Academic Connections, (Spring).

Okakok, L. (1989). Serving the purpose of education. Harvard Educational Review, 59, 405-422.

Ogbu, J. (1990). Overcoming racial barriers to equal access. In J. Goodlad (Ed.), Access to knowledge: An agenda for our nation's schools. Princeton, NJ: College Entrance Examination Board.

Ramsey, P. (1987). Teaching and learning in a diverse world: Multicultural education for young children. New York, NY: Columbia University Press.

Saville-Troike, M. (1978). A guide to culture in the classroom. Washington, D.C.: National Clearinghouse for Bilingual Education.

Siu, S. (1990). Where to start looking for resources in the community. Unpublished handout available from the author: Wheelock College, 45 Pilgrim Road, Boston, MA 02215.

Swap. S. (1987). Enhancing parent involvement in schools. New York, NY: Teachers College Press.

Swap, S. (1990). Schools reaching out and success for all children: Two case studies. Boston, MA: Institute for Responsive Education.

Walberg, H., Bole, R., and Waxman, H. (1980). School-based family socialization and reading achievement in the inner city. Psychology in the Schools, 17, 509-514.

G-45

GENERAL READING LIST

The following titles cover a range of issues regarding parent involvement. Many of these titles are free; others are available for a fee. To order, contact the agencies listed.

Becoming a Nation of Readers: What Parents Can Do
U.S. Department of Education, 1988

This booklet (Item 447X) lists ideas and sources of information for home activities, based on research, that will improve reading achievement. It also describes what parents should look for in their children's school programs. ($.50). Consumer Information Center, Pueblo, CO 81009.

Beyond the Bake Sale: An Educator's Guide to Working With Parents
Anne Henderson, Carl Marburger, and Theodora Ooms, 1985

Parent involvement experts show how to build parent–school partnerships that go beyond fund-raising and boosterism to involve parents in important aspects of their child's schooling. The guide includes advice on how to involve single, low-income, and working parents. ($8.95). National Committee for Citizens in Education, 10840 Little Patuxent Parkway, Suite 301, Columbia, MD 21044.

Choosing a School for Your Child
U.S. Department of Education, 1989

This booklet (Item 471X) describes the kinds of schools that may be available in your district and presents suggestions and a checklist to help parents evaluate schools. It includes information on how to transfer from one school district to another and a list of additional resources. Also available in Spanish; see entry under *Cómo Escoger una Escuela para su Hijo*. ($.50). Consumer Information Center, Pueblo, CO 81009.

Communicating With Culturally Diverse Parents of Exceptional Children
ERIC Clearinghouse on Handicapped and Gifted Children, 1991

This *ERIC Digest* (E 497) offers educators of exceptional children insights into the perspectives, communication styles, values, and beliefs of culturally diverse parents. Includes guidelines for providing parents with information and support. (Free). ERIC Clearinghouse on Handicapped and Gifted Children, Council for Exceptional Children, 1920 Association Drive, Reston, VA 22091–1589.

Communicating With Parents
Janet Chrispeels, Marcia Boruta, and Mary Daugherty, 1988

This 300-page volume explores the many ways that schools communicate with parents and gain parent support and involvement. Topics include school newsletters and handbooks, homework, volunteers, progress reports, contracts, home visits, and telephone tips. Both schoolwide and classroom strategies for various grade levels are provided. ($28.00). San Diego County Office of Education, 6401 Linda Vista Road, Room 407, San Diego, CA 92111–7399.

Cómo Escoger una Escuela para su Hijo
Departamento de Educación de los Estados Unidos, 1991

Aunque al presente se está considerando un número de acciones legislativas sobre la cuestión de la selección de escuelas, existen opciones para sus hijos ahora mismo. *Cómo Escoger una Escuela para su Hijo* le ayudar a encarar esas opciones, a hacer las preguntas correctas y a tomar sus decisiones. Se ofrecen ejemplares gratuitos en español de *Cómo Escoger una Escuela para su Hijo*.

(From The ERIC Review. Vol I, Issue 3, Sept. 1991)

Para obtener un ejemplar gratuito, envíe su nombre y dirección a: National Clearinghouse for Bilingual Education, 1118 22nd Street NW, Washington, DC 20037.

The Evidence Continues To Grow: Parent Involvement Improves Student Achievement
Anne Henderson, 1987

The research points to the benefits of including parents in school programs, encouraging parents to monitor children's schoolwork at home, and calling parents in to help when children are failing. This publication summarizes 49 studies and analyzes major conclusions. ($10.00). National Committee for Citizens in Education, 10840 Little Patuxent Parkway, Suite 301, Columbia, MD 21044.

Families and Early Childhood Programs
Douglas R. Powell, 1989

This publication (#142) reviews information on relations between families and early childhood programs and on the operation and effectiveness of parent education and support programs. It includes research and theoretical perspectives as well as promising directions for program practices. ($6.00). NAEYC Publications, 1834 Connecticut Avenue NW, Washington, DC 20009–5786.

Family Support, Education, and Involvement: A Guide for State Action
Council of Chief State School Officers, 1989

The guide presents discussions and research on the benefits of family support, education, and involvement programs; identifies state strategies, actions, and programs to encourage implementation of such programs in schools with significant concentrations of students at risk; and lists resources and organizations that provide leadership in these areas. ($10.00). Council of Chief State School Officers, 400 North Capitol Street NW, Washington, DC 20001–1511.

The Forgotten Factor in School Success: The Family. A Policymaker's Guide
Dorothy Rich, 1985

This guide describes specific programs, policies, and low-cost methods to support the educational role of the family and mobilize schools and families to work together in educational partnerships. ($5.00). Home and School Institute, 1201 16th Street NW, Washington, DC 20036.

Help Your Child Become a Good Reader
U.S. Department of Education, 1985

This pamphlet (Item 449X) describes more than a dozen activities that will make your children successful readers and discusses important factors that influence success and interest in reading. Tips for teaching reading fundamentals are based on everyday occurrences and household items. ($.50). Consumer Information Center, Pueblo, CO 81009.

Help Your Child Do Better in School
U.S. Department of Education, 1985

This pamphlet (Item 450X) provides tips for adults to help children in all grades improve their study skills. Addresses such concerns as attention, motivation, and study habits. ($.50). Consumer Information Center, Pueblo, CO 81009.

Help Your Child Improve in Test-Taking
U.S. Department of Education, 1985

This pamphlet (Item 451X) offers simple techniques to help children at all grade levels avoid "test anxiety" and prepare for teacher-made and standardized tests. Includes some advice for parents as well as suggestions for followup after the test. ($.50). Consumer Information Center, Pueblo, CO 81009.

Help Your Child Learn Math
U.S. Department of Education, 1985

This pamphlet (Item 452X) contains suggestions for helping children in grades 1–3 connect their real-life experiences with the math skills of counting, estimating, and measuring. Includes guidance on how to correct children's mistakes and build their knowledge and confidence. ($.50). Consumer Information Center, Pueblo, CO 81009.

Help Your Child Learn To Write Well
U.S. Department of Education, 1985

This pamphlet (Item 453X) suggests simple strategies for adults to help encourage children to express their ideas through writing. Covers the writing process and outlines enjoyable activities for kids to try. ($.50). Consumer Information Center, Pueblo, CO 81009.

GENERAL READING LIST (continued)

Helping Your Child Learn Geography
U.S. Department of Education, 1991

This booklet (Item 454X) is designed to teach children the fundamentals of geography in a format that is challenging and fun. It includes a fold-out, outline map of the United States to test children's newfound knowledge. ($.50). Consumer Information Center, Pueblo, CO 81009.

Helping Your Child Learn Science
U.S. Department of Education, 1991

This booklet (Item 611X) suggests ways for parents to interest children from ages 3 to 10 in science. It includes a sampling of family activities, tips on encouraging schools to develop good science programs, and recommended books and materials. (Free). Consumer Information Center, Pueblo, CO 81009.

Helping Your Child Use the Library
U.S. Department of Education, 1989

This booklet (Item 455X) explains how parents can introduce children to the library. It discusses programs and activities for children of all ages and for those with special needs. ($.50). Consumer Information Center, Pueblo, CO 81009.

How Can Parents Get More Out of School Meetings?
Educational Resources Information Center, 1989

This pamphlet offers suggestions to help both parents and teachers make parent–teacher conferences more productive. (Free). ACCESS ERIC, 1600 Research Boulevard, Rockville, MD 20850.

Improving Schools and Empowering Parents: Choice in American Education
U.S. Department of Education, 1989

This report describes a White House workshop on choice in education; the possibilities of implementing choice; and benefits for schools and parents when programs of choice are carefully planned, developed, and monitored. (Free). Education Information Branch, U.S. Department of Education, 555 New Jersey Avenue NW, Washington, DC 20208–5641.

Increasing Parental Involvement as a Means of Improving Our Nation's Schools
Evelyn K. Moore, Black Child Development Institute, Inc., 1990

This publication focuses on approaches to meaningful parent involvement, the need for innovation in family–school relationships, and barriers that impede parent involvement. It describes model programs and includes suggestions for creating cooperative and understanding home–school relationships. A parent resource guide is included, describing 18 experiences that promote children's development and help prepare them for school. (ED 325 232, $6.24). ERIC Document Reproduction Service, 7420 Fullerton Road, Suite 110, Springfield, VA 22153–2852.

Involving At-Risk Families in Their Children's Education
Lynn Balster Liontos, 1991

This *ERIC Digest* discusses, in a question-and-answer format, who is at risk, why at-risk students especially need their parents to be involved in their education, why schools have not been successful in reaching these parents, and what schools and educators can do. ($2.50). Publication Sales, ERIC Clearinghouse on Educational Management, University of Oregon, 1787 Agate Street NW, Eugene, OR 97403–5207.

Involving the Families of At-Risk Youth in the Educational Process
Lynn Balster Liontos, 1991

This publication presents background information educators need to know if they want to involve families who are poor, nonwhite, or speak a language other than English. It explores barriers that stand in the way of reaching at-risk families and proposes ways of overcoming these barriers. ($6.00). Publication Sales, ERIC

(From The ERIC Review, Vol. I, Issue 3, Sept. 1991)

6-48

Clearinghouse on Educational Management, University of Oregon, 1787 Agate Street NW, Eugene, OR 97403-5207.

Involving Parents in the Education of Their Children
Patricia Clark Brown, 1989

This *ERIC Digest* discusses ways to involve parents in the education of their children, methods for reaching them, and barriers to overcome in the process. (Free). ERIC Clearinghouse on Elementary and Early Childhood Education, University of Illinois, 805 W. Pennsylvania Avenue, Urbana, IL 61801.

Making the Most of Your Child's Education: A Guide for Parents
Elena Pell, 1989

This publication provides advice for Hispanic parents on how to help their children succeed academically. Each chapter includes discussion questions and exercises to help parents work with other parents to improve their children's success. ($5.00). Spanish translation available. ASPIRA Association, 1112 16th Street NW, Suite 340, Washington, DC 20036.

MegaSkills: How Families Can Help Children Succeed in School and Beyond
Dorothy Rich, 1988

This publication describes many easy, enjoyable, and inexpensive home learning activities for parents to teach children basic values, attitudes, and behaviors affecting their future achievement. Includes step-by-step instructions on how parents can teach MegaSkills at home, and helps parents make the best use of limited family time. ($8.95). Houghton Mifflin Company, Wayside Road, Burlington, MA 01803.

Parental Involvement in Education
U.S. Department of Education, 1991

Part of the Policy Perspectives Series, this report by James S. Coleman discusses "social capital"—social relations within the family or the community that are important for children's development. The author examines transformations in American households and asserts that schools have a new role to play in rebuilding social capital in communities and families. ($1.50). Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, DC 20402.

Parent Education and Support Programs
Douglas R. Powell, 1990

This *ERIC Digest* describes current programmatic efforts to inform and support parents. It briefly reviews the research evidence on the effectiveness of parent education and support programs. (Free.) ERIC Clearinghouse on Elementary and Early Childhood Education, University of Illinois, 805 W. Pennsylvania Avenue, Urbana, IL 61801.

Parent Involvement and Success for All Children: What We Know Now
Susan McAllister Swap, 1990

This review of the evidence linking parent involvement and student achievement argues that an approach embodying "partnership for school success" holds the greatest promise for making an impact. ($7.50). Institute for Responsive Education, 605 Commonwealth Avenue, Boston, MA 02215.

Parent Involvement in Elementary Language Arts: A Program Model
Marge Simic, 1991

This *ERIC Digest* documents a program to encourage parent participation in the elementary language arts classroom. The program addresses volunteering in the classroom as well as parental participation at home. (Free). ERIC Clearinghouse on Reading and Communication Skills, Indiana University, Smith Research Center, Suite 150, 2805 East 10th Street NW, Bloomington, IN 47408-2698.

Parent Involvement in the Educational Process
David Peterson, 1989

This *ERIC Digest* discusses, in a question-and-answer format, the benefits of parent involvement, what parents can do to improve their children's performance, the special challenges of involving parents of at-risk children, how schools can get parents involved, and how districts can implement parent involvement programs. ($2.50). Publication Sales, ERIC Clearinghouse on Educational Management, University of Oregon, 1787 Agate Street NW, Eugene, OR 97403-5207.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

GENERAL READING LIST (continued)

Parents and Schools. The Harvard Education Letter
November/December 1988

This newsletter discusses home reinforcement of learning, low-income children, and building trusting and respectful home–school ties. It also includes an interview regarding successful school–parent relationships and short sections on homework as a family activity and parents and special education placement. ($3.50). *The Harvard Education Letter*, 79 Garden Street NW, Cambridge, MA 02138.

Parents: Here's How To Make School Visits Work
U.S. Department of Education, 1986

This brochure discusses planning a visit; questions to ask on school atmosphere, curriculum, children's progress, and parent involvement; and suggestions for working parents. (Free). Education Information Branch, U.S. Department of Education, 555 New Jersey Avenue NW, Washington, DC 20208–5641.

Phi Delta Kappan
January 1991

This issue contains a large special section on various aspects of parent involvement, including articles on several state and school district initiatives, Chapter I programs, and federally funded demonstration programs. ($3.50). *Phi Delta Kappan*, P.O. Box 789, Bloomington, IN 47402.

Schools and Communities Together: A Guide to Parent Involvement
Karen Reed Wikelund, 1990

This publication offers tips and strategies for breaking down school–home barriers and bringing parents into their children's educational lives; describes roles and responsibilities for administrators, teachers, outreach workers, parents, community members, and children; and cites research and results of demonstration projects in two elementary schools. ($9.95). Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory, Document Reproduction Service, 101 SW Main Street, Suite 500, Portland, OR 97024.

Together Is Better
Hispanic Policy Development Project, 1990

This booklet documents effective strategies (and warns against some noneffective ones) for encouraging and promoting increased involvement on the part of Hispanic parents. The strategies were the result of a 3-year effort involving 42 school projects nationwide. HPDP, Inc., 250 Park Avenue South, Suite 5000A, New York, NY 10003.

Working With Families: Promising Programs To Help Parents Support Young Children's Learning
U.S. Department of Education, 1991

This report describes the practices of 17 family education programs that seek to engage disadvantaged parents in assisting their children to succeed in school. Focusing on parents of children ages 3 to 8, the report offers practitioners' experience with such challenges as recruiting and retaining parents, determining staffing patterns, and establishing ties with the schools. (Free). U.S. Department of Education, Room 4049, 400 Maryland Avenue SW, Washington, DC 20202–4110.

Workplace Literacy
Beginning Literacy and Your Child
Beginning Literacy and Your Child

Organizations and Associations

Alliance for Parental Involvement in Education (AllPIE)
This parent-to-parent organization provides information about family education options (public school, private school, and home education), and parent and student rights within those options. Services include a newsletter, a book and resources catalog, a referral service, pamphlets, workshops, and conferences.
P.O. Box 59, East Chatham,
New York, NY 12060–0059.
(518) 392–6900. Program Contacts: Seth Rockmuller and Katharine Houk.

ASPIRA Association, Inc.
A national Hispanic education leadership development organization, ASPIRA administers a national parent involvement demonstration project in Hispanic communities in nine cities and produces booklets to help Hispanic parents with their children's education. 1112 16th Street NW, Suite 340, Washington, DC 20036. (202) 835–3600. Program Contact: Lisa Colon.

Council for Educational Development and Research
The members of this association are long-term education research and development institutions that create programs and materials, including information on parent involvement useful for educators and parents. 1201 16th Street NW, Washington, DC 20036. (202) 223–1593. Program Contact: Diane Schwartz.

Hispanic Policy Development Project (HPDP)
This nonprofit organization encourages the analysis of public and private policies and policy proposals affecting Hispanics in the United States. After conducting a nationwide grant program, it produced a publication highlighting successful strategies for working with Latino parents. 250 Park Avenue South, Suite 5000A, New York, NY 10003. (212) 523–9323. Program Contact: Carmen Lydia Ramos.

The Home and School Institute (HSI)
For more than two decades, HSI has developed practical self-help programs to unite the educational resources of the home, the school, and the community. HSI is currently presenting MegaSkills seminars nationally to train parent workshop leaders (see General Reading List, page 13). Special Projects Office, 1201 16th Street NW, Washington, DC 20036. (202) 466–3633. Program Contact: Dorothy Rich.

Institute for Responsive Education (IRE)
This national research and advocacy organization studies schools and helps them become more responsive to citizen and parent involvement and concerns. IRE publishes the journal *Equity and Choice* and various reports and is principal contact for the new National Center on Families (see Department of Education Initiatives, page 7). 605 Commonwealth Avenue, Boston, MA 02215. (617) 353–3309. Program Contact: Owen Heleen.

International Reading Association (IRA)
This organization works with parents, educators, and researchers to improve reading instruction and increase literacy. IRA also offers information to parents on how to develop lifelong reading habits with their children. 800 Barksdale Road, Newark, DE 19704–8139. (302) 731–1600. Program Contact: Peter Mitchell, Executive Director.

Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund (MALDEF)
This civil rights organization conducts a Parent Leadership Program for promoting the participation of Latino parents as leaders at their children's schools. The program involves a 12-week course, including parent–teacher conferences and meetings with school district officials. 634 South Spring Street, 11th Floor, Los Angeles, CA 90014. (213) 629–2512. Program Contact: Luisa Perez-Ortega.

National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC)
NAEYC offers many resources for educators on all aspects of child development and early childhood education, including parent involvement. A free catalog is available. 1834 Connecticut Avenue NW, Washington, DC 20009. (202) 232–8777. Program Contact: Pat Spahr.

National Association of Partners in Education
This organization helps individuals and groups start and manage school volunteer programs and business–education partnerships. 209 Madison Street, Suite 401, Alexandria, VA 22314. (703) 836–4880. Program Contact: Daniel W. Merenda, Executive Director.

National Black Child Development Institute
This organization provides direct services and conducts advocacy campaigns to improve the quality of life for black children and youth. Family and early childhood education are emphasized, and speakers and publications are available. 1463 Rhode Island Avenue NW, Washington, DC 20005. (202) 387–1281. Program Contact: Sherry Deane.

National Coalition for Parent Involvement in Education (NCPIE)
This organization, composed of more than 25 national education and community life associations, is dedicated to developing effective family and school partnerships. To receive a free brochure, "Developing Family/School Partnerships: Guidelines for Schools and School Districts," other information about NCPIE, and additional parent involvement resources, send a stamped (45 cents), self-addressed, business-sized envelope to NCPIE, Box 39, 1201 16th Street NW, Washington, DC 20036.

National Coalition of Title I/Chapter I Parents (National Parent Center)
This organization provides a voice for Chapter I parents at the federal, regional, state, and local levels. The

(From The ERIC Review, Vol. I, Issue 3, Sept. 1991)

Coalition publishes a newsletter, provides training, and sponsors conferences. Edmonds School Building. h and D Streets NE, Washington, DC 002. (202) 547-9286. Program ontact: Robert Witherspoon.

National Committee for Citizens in Education
This organization has many publications for parents and also provides free information and help for parents with school problems. Request a free bookmark with information on parent involvement in the middle school. 10840 Little Patuxent Parkway, Suite 301, Columbia, MD 21044.
1-800-NETWORK.

National Council of La Raza (NCLR)
This research and advocacy organization works on behalf of the U.S. Hispanic population and provides technical assistance to community-based organizations. NCLR's Project EXCEL is a national education demonstration project which includes tutoring services and parental education. 810 First Street NE, Suite 300, Washington, DC 20002-4205. (202) 289-1380. Program Contact: Denise De La Rosa.

tional Information Center for hildren and Youth with Handicaps (NICHCY)
This organization provides free information to assist parents, educators, caregivers, advocates, and others in helping children and youth with disabilities. NICHCY provides information on local, state, and national disability groups for parents and professionals and maintains databases with current information on disability topics. Publications include *News Digest* and *Parent Guides*. P.O. Box 1492, Washington, DC 20013.
1-800-999-5599.

Parent-Teacher Associations
National, state, and local PTAs have many resources and materials that can be used at home and at school to support children's learning. For a free list of publications, send a stamped, self-addressed, business-sized envelope to Publications List, National PTA, Department D, 700 North Rush Street, Chicago, IL 60611-2571. Local PTAs ay also have the list.

Parents as Teachers National Center (PAT)
PAT encourages parents of children from birth to age 3 to think of themselves as their children's first and most influential teachers. It provides information and training to parents, supports public policy initiatives, and offers parent educator certification. University of Missouri-St. Louis, Marillac Hall, 8001 Natural Bridge Road, St. Louis, MO 63121-4499. (314) 553-5738. Program Contact: Claire Eldredge.

Parent Training and Information Centers, and Technical Assistance to Parent Projects
The Office of Special Education Programs supports a network of 60 Parent Training and Information Centers in all 50 states and Puerto Rico to enable parents to participate more effectively with professionals in meeting the educational needs of children with disabilities. Technical Assistance to Parent Projects (TAPP) provides technical assistance and coordination to the 60 PTIs and to developing minority programs in urban and rural locations. 95 Berkeley Street, Suite 104, Boston, MA 02116. (617) 482-2915. Program Contact: Martha Ziegler.

Federal Agencies

Department of Health and Human Services
Office of Human Development Services
200 Independence Avenue SW
Washington, DC 20201

- Administration for Children, Youth and Families
  (202) 245-0347

Department of Agriculture
Extension Service
3443 South Building
Washington, DC 200250

- Human Development and Family Relations
  (202) 447-2018

Department of Education
400 Maryland Avenue SW
Washington, DC 20202-7240

- Office of Educational Research and Improvement
  (202) 219-2050
- Center on Families, Communities, Schools, and Children's Learning
  (617) 353-3309
- National Research Center on Education in the Inner Cities
  (215) 787-3001
- Southwest Educational Development Laboratory
  (512) 476-6861
- Compensatory Education Programs, Office of Elementary and Secondary Education
  (202) 401-1682
- Office of Bilingual Education and Minority Languages Affairs
  (202) 732-5063
- White House Initiative on Hispanic Education
  (202) 401-3008

Clearinghouses

ERIC Clearinghouse on Educational Management
University of Oregon
1787 Agate Street
Eugene, OR 97403-5207
(503) 346-5043

ERIC Clearinghouse on Elementary and Early Childhood Education
University of Illinois, College of Education
805 W. Pennsylvania Avenue
Urbana, IL 61801-4897
(217) 333-1386

ERIC Clearinghouse on Rural Education and Small Schools
Appalachia Educational Laboratory
1031 Quarrier Street
P.O. Box 1348
Charleston, WV 25325-1348
(800) 624-9120

ERIC Clearinghouse on Urban Education
Teachers College, Columbia University
Institute for Urban and Minority Education
Main Hall, Room 303, Box 40
525 West 120th Street
New York, NY 10027-9998
(212) 678-3433

G-52

NCPIE Releases New Guide to Parent Involvement Resources

Washington, D.C., October 30, 1992--The National Coalition for Parent Involvement in Education (NCPIE) has released the Guide to Parent Involvement Resources, developed under the leadership of the Council of Chief State School Officers. The guide is designed to help parents, educators, policymakers, and parent and community groups identify resources for the development of family/school partnerships. It features profiles of over 30 national education, research, and advocacy groups and describes their policies, services, projects, training activities, studies, and publications related specifically to family support, education, and involvement, and, more broadly, community involvement in education.

"We have heard the evidence over and over again--when parents are involved in their children's schools, they do better in school and they go to better schools. This publication will empower parents, teachers, administrators, and community leaders to find the information and the support they need to establish comprehensive parent involvement programs in their communities and schools," said Elena Pell, 1992 NCPIE Chair and Director of Program Development for The ASPIRA Association.

The guide identifies resources for: (1) specific types of parent involvement, including parent education, family support services, home-school communication, volunteer programs, home learning activities, and school improvement, governance and advocacy; (2) parent involvement research, policies, partnerships, and program development and improvement; and (3) families, teachers, administrators, school councils, parent groups, state education agencies, early childhood education, elementary school through secondary school, special education, bilingual education, and special outreach to single parents, teen parents, low-income families, and Latino and African-American families.

The Guide to Parent Involvement Resources was produced with support from the C.S. Mott Foundation. It can be ordered for $10.00 plus $2.50 shipping and handling from the National Committee for Citizens in Education, 900 2nd Street, N.E., Suite 8, Washington, D.C. 20002-3557 or call 202-408-0447.

The National Coalition for Parent Involvement in Education is comprised of 34 national organizations involved in education, research, and advocacy. NCPIE's mission is to advocate for the involvement of parents in their children's education and to foster relationships between home, school, and community that can enhance the education of all our nation's young people.